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LECTURES

LECTURES

ON

THE FOUR LAST BOOKS

OF THE

PENTATEUCH.

PART I.

ON THE

AUTHENTICITY OF THE PENTATEUCH,

AND

THE TRUTH OF THE HISTORY, BOTH OF COMMON AND MIRACULOUS EVENTS,

CONTAINED IN THE FOUR LAST BOOKS OF IT.

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LECTURE I.

THE Jewish nation has received the Pentateuch as containing the only authentic history of their Lawgiver and his institutions, from the very æra when these institutions commenced to the present day—Arguments to prove the reception of the Pentateuch from the present day, back to the return of the Jews from the Babylonish Captivity—Arguments to prove the Pentateuch was not first compiled at that æra, or altered and modified according to circumstances then existing; but that it was a previously existing and acknowledged code—Pentateuch proved prior to the separation of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah—Prior to the establishment of the regal government in Israel—Not first compiled by Samuel—Acknowledged by Joshua.

LECTURES, &c.

PART I.

LECT. I.

DEUTERONOMY xxxi. 9, 10, 11.

"AND Moses wrote this Law, and delivered it to the Priests "the sons of Levi, which bare the Ark of the Covenant of "the Lord, and unto all the Elders of Israel: and Moses "commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven "years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the "Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear "before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall "choose; thou shalt read this Law before all Israel, in "their hearing."

SUCH is the charge which the Jewish Lawgiver is related to have delivered to his nation, while they were yet collected in one body under his command, on the borders of the land of their inheritance; solemnly publishing the volume of his Law, and inculcating its constant preservation and periodical public recitation as a sacred duty to which the priests and rulers of the people were bound most religiously to attend. It shall be the object of this Lecture to examine, how far it can be proved, that the Pentateuch which our Bible contains is in all material points the same as the book of the Law thus uninterruptedly received by the Jewish nation,

as having been written and published by their Lawgiver at the period of their first settlement in the land of Canaan; a point of the highest importance, to establish the truth of the facts which this portion of the Scripture history contains, and the divine original of that Law which it promulgates.

That the Jews have acknowledged the authenticity of the Pentateuch, from the present time back to the æra of their return from the Babylonish Captivity, a period of more than 2,300 years, admits not a possibility of doubt. The five books of Moses have been during that period constantly placed at the head of the Jewish sacred volume, and divided into fixed portions, one of which was read and explained in their synagogues, not only every sabbath with the other scriptures, but in many places twice a week, and not unfrequently every evening when they alone were read: they have been received as divinely inspired by every Jewish sect, even by the Sadducees who questioned the divinity of the remaining works of the Old Testament.

In truth the veneration of the Jews for their scriptures, and above all for the Pentateuch, seems to have risen almost to a superstitious reverence *. Extracts from the Mosaic Law were written on pieces

* Compare Deut. xxii. 12. and Numbers xv. 38 & 39. with Matthew xxiii. 5. They are in use at this day. Vid. Picart's Ceremonies Religieuses, for the forms and modes in which they are written and worn: Vol. I. p. 5. Part I. ch. xi. 2.

pieces of parchment, and placed on the borders of their garments, or round their wrists and foreheads; nay, they at a later period counted with the minutest exactness not only the chapters and paragraphs, but the words and letters, which each book of their scripture contains: Thus also the translation first of the Pentateuch, and afterwards of the remaining works of the Old Testament, into Greek, for the use of the Alexandrian Jews, disseminated this sacred volume over a great part of the civilized world, in the language most universally understood, and rendered it accessible to the learned and inquisitive in every country; so as to preclude all suspicion that it could be materially altered by either Jews or Christians, to support their respective opinions as to the person and character of the Messiah; the substance of the text being by this translation fixed and authenticated at least 270 years before the appearance of our Lord.

But how far have we reason to believe that the Pentateuch was not first compiled after the Babylonish Captivity, from the indistinct traditions of the history of the Jewish nation, which in an absence of seventy years from their country may perhaps have lost all clear records of former events? In answer to this suspicion I observe, that it is not supported by any semblance of probability, because the period of seventy years was not long enough to lose all clear public records of former events: nineteen years of the captivity of the Jewish nation had elapsed

before the burning of the Temple, and the carrying away the last of the people; it is therefore perfectly credible that many individuals then alive may have survived the close of the Captivity, and witnessed the rebuilding of the second Temple; and of this really having taken place we have direct testimony. "Many," says Ezra*, "of the Priests and Levites, "and chief of the Fathers, who were ancient men, "that had seen the first house; when the foundation "of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with "a loud voice:" Doubtless from the melancholy contrast between the magnificence of the old Temple, and the infancy and poverty of the new.

Still further: Not only the individuals who remained could compare the circumstances which had existed before the Captivity, and thus could not be deceived by so gross an imposition as any attempt to fabricate, as the public code of the national religion and government, a new compilation never before heard of; but we know that writings of far less importance were preserved; for example, no priests were admitted to resume their offices, who could not trace back their genealogy to Aaron and the heads of the Levites cotemporary with Moses: —In the book of Ezra who presided over the Jews after their restoration from the Babylonish Captivity, the particular families are specified, "who sought "their register among those that were reckoned by "genealogy;

* Ezra iii. 12. and Nehem. vii. 64.

" genealogy *, but they were not found, therefore " were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood." —Nor was this exactness in tracing genealogies confined to the priests; we are told of others †, who " could not shew their father's house and their " seed, whether they were of Israel." And the reason of this exactness is plain from this; that such of the Jews as believed their prophets, expected a return into their native land after a period of seventy years, and preserved their genealogies ‡, as the titles on which they might resume their properties, with the same care which they had always employed from the very first commencement of the state. Thus Jeremiah the prophet, for the express purpose of impressing upon the Jews the expectation of their deliverance, is represented as " purchasing a field according to the right of redemption, subscribing the evidence, and sealing it " before witnesses, and giving it to Baruch the " scribe," and charging him before all that were present, saying, " Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, " the God of Israel §, Take these evidences, this " evidence of the purchase, both that which is " sealed

* Ezra ii. 62. † Ezra ii. 59 & 60.

‡ To shew the constant accuracy of the Jews in preserving their genealogies, and the necessity of their doing so, vid. Numbers, ch. i. compared with ch. xxxiii. 54. and Josh. ch. xiv. Vid. also 1 Chronicles, the nine first chapters, particularly ch. v. ver. 7 & 17. and ch. ix. ver. 1 & 22.

§ Vide Jeremiah, ch. xxxii. ver. 14. Vide the entire chapter, from ver. 6. to the end.

" sealed and that which is open, and put them in " an earthen vessel, that they may continue many " days; for thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God " of Israel, houses and fields and vineyards shall " be possessed again in this land." Now is it possible that the whole nation should lose all public records of their public Law, when they preserved public records of the descent of private families? Is it possible that the genealogies of the priests and their distinct offices should be preserved, while the Law that described these offices, and assigned them to different families, was forgotten? Is it probable the * identical vessels and furniture of the Temple which had been carried away at the beginning of the Captivity, should be restored as they are recorded to have been, and that no one copy of whatever code existed to regulate the laws and religion of the whole nation, as well as the Temple worship, should be preserved?

The only thing which gives the least plausibility to this suspicion is, that we are told that the Jews had during the Captivity (as these objectors say) lost their language; hence it is rashly inferred, that they also lost all records in the language. Now the real fact is this, that the original language of the Jews had indeed degenerated among the great mass of the people, by the corruption of foreign dialects; but the learned part of the nation still perfectly understood it, and were able to interpret it with ease; and

* Ezra, vi. 5.

and the records contained in it * lost nothing of their clearness or their use. Further, this very circumstance supplies no weak presumptive argument, that as the Pentateuch which now exists is written in pure Hebrew, it was composed before the Captivity.

This probable conclusion acquires almost resistless force, when we consider the direct testimony, first of the Jews, and next of the Samaritans. The tenor of their history after the Captivity represents the Jews, not as regulating their religion and policy by any new Law, but as reviving the observance of the old Law given by Moses, interpreting it with humble veneration, and submitting to it with the most prompt obedience.

Ezra is distinguished as the scribe, because he was a ready scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given; and very many others also are mentioned, "who caused the people to understand the Law." The manner in which, by the assistance of those learned interpreters, it was read and explained to the people, is so decisive of the present point as to deserve our whole attention. We are told that † "all the people were gathered toge-
"ther as one man; and they spake unto Ezra the
"Scribe, to bring the book of the Law of Moses,
"which the Lord had commanded to Israel; and
"Ezra

* Vid. Ezra, passim; particularly ch. ii. ver. 2. and ch. vi. ver. 18.

† Vide Nehemiah, the entire chapters, viii. ix. & x.

" Ezra brought the Law before the congregation " both of men and women, and all that could hear " with understanding, upon the first day of the " seventh month——and he read therein from the " morning until the mid-day, and the ears of all the " people were attentive unto the book of the Law. " —And all the people went their way, to eat and " to drink, and to make great mirth, because they " had understood the words which were declared " unto them; and on the second day were gathered " together the chief of the fathers of all the people, " the Priests and the Levites, to Ezra the scribe, to " understand the words of the Law; and they found " written in the Law which the Lord had com- " manded to Moses, that the Children of Israel " should dwell in booths, in the feast of the seventh " month; and all the congregation of them that " were come again out of the Captivity made " booths, and sat under the booths; for since the " days of Joshua the son of Nunn unto that day, " had not the Children of Israel done so, and there " was very great gladness. Also day by day, from " the first day unto the last day, he read in the " book of the Law of God; and they kept the feast " seven days, and on the eighth day was a solemn " assembly according to the manner which the Law " prescribed." Undoubtedly it is probable that Ezra prepared for use new copies of the Mosaic Law, that a sufficient number might be ready to supply the demands of the people. In doing this he

he may have inserted some notes, to explain or complete passages obscure or defective. But what symptoms are there in this history of a new compilation, a code of doubtful authority, a collection of uncertain traditions? How idle is it to talk of these things, when the fact is so plainly the reverse.

We have yet a stronger proof that the Law thus offered to the people was not a selection and revival of such former laws alone as suited their present temper and situation; such laws as were agreeable to the general wishes of the people, and therefore might be supposed to obtain general submission without any minute inquiry into their authority. No, the case was otherwise; the code thus received enjoined in some instances sacrifices the most severe and distressing to individuals, sacrifices which no politic governor would have ventured to propose, and which no people would have submitted to, if any doubt could have been raised as to the authority of the Law requiring them. For, as the Scribes read the book of Moses "in the audience of the "people, therein was found written*, that the "Ammonite and the Moabite should not come "into the congregation of the Lord for ever; now "it came to pass, that when they had heard the "Law, that they separated from Israel all the "mixed multitude." Even this must have created great discontent, and excited much opposition, if the authority of the Law requiring it had not been clear and

* Nehemiah, xiii. 1. & 3.

and unquestioned. But there was yet a more trying proof of obedience required.

The Mosaic code commanded that Jews should not intermarry with any of the neighbouring idolatrous nations. On the dissolution of the state and the dispersion of the people at the Captivity, this Law was violated in numerous instances; on the reassembling of the people, the violation was too glaring to escape the notice of the zealous supporters of the divine code. The history of Ezra describes in the strongest colours the feelings of grief and alarm which this discovery excited, the vast numbers who were involved in this guilt, and the high rank and authority of many of the offenders*. "The princes," says Ezra, "came to me saying, "The people of Israel, and the Priests and the "Levites, have not separated themselves from the "people of the lands, doing according to their "abominations; for they have taken of their "daughters for themselves and for their sons, so "that the holy seed have mingled themselves with "the people of those lands; yea, the hands of "the princes and rulers have been chief in this "trespass."

"When Ezra," says the history, "had prayed, "and when he had confessed, weeping and casting "himself down before the house of God; there "assembled unto him out of Israel, a very great "congregation of men and women and children: "and

* Ezra, the entire chapters ix. & x.

" and the people wept very sore, and Shecaniah on
" the part of the chiefs of the people, answered and
" said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our
" God, and have taken strange wives of the people
" of the land, yet now there is hope in Israel con-
" cerning this thing; now therefore let us make a
" covenant with our God, to PUT AWAY ALL THE
" STRANGE WIVES, AND SUCH AS ARE BORN OF
" THEM, according to the counsel of my lord, and
" of those that tremble at the commandment of our
" God, and let it be done according to the Law.
" Then arose Ezra, and made the chief Priests, the
" Scribes, and all Israel, to swear that they should
" do according to this word: and they sware."
And proclamation was made unto all the children of the Captivity to enforce this Law. The greatness of the sacrifice may be estimated by the severity of the penalty under which it was enjoined: " Who-
" soever would not come within three days, to
" comply with this Law, all his substance was to
" be forfeited, and himself separated from the con-
" gregation." And the offenders assembled in great numbers, and certain of the Elders and Judges were appointed to examine the matter, and so many did the enquiry extend to, that it held for three entire months; and among the offenders we find many of the Priests and Levites: it was not therefore a contrivance of theirs to strengthen their influence. In a word, I rely on this fact as a full proof, that the code the Jews received after the Captivity was in

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all respects the very same they had been subject to before it; not then newly compiled, not then artfully modified, but brought forward exactly as they found it, in the known records of the nation, and submitted to with scrupulous reverence, as of undoubted and divine authority.

Strong as this proof is, we have another which may perhaps be deemed even stronger; the Samaritans * we know from the period of the Captivity became the most bitter enemies of the Jews; this animosity was greatly enflamed at the close of the Captivity, because the Jews would not permit them to join in building the Temple. For they proposed to the chief of the fathers; "Let us build with you, "for we seek your God, as you do, and we do "sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esarhaddon "king of Assyria who brought us up hither." But their proposal was rejected with contempt. These Samaritans must then have derived their knowledge of the Mosaic institutions from a code which existed at the commencement of the Captivity. According to the history †, which relates, "a priest from "amongst the captive Jews was sent to teach the "colony planted by the king of Assyria in Samaria, "the manner of the God of the land, and he came "and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they "should fear the Lord," undoubtedly by instructing them

* 2 Kings, ch. xvii. from ver. 24, to the end; and Ezra ch. iv.; Nehem. ch. iv. and ch. vi.

† 2 Kings, ch. xvii. 27, 28.

them in the Mosaic Law. They would never have received as the rule of their religion a new compilation, formed by their enemies at the very moment when they rejected their alliance, and would not acknowledge them as partakers of their religion, or admit them to worship at their Temple. And what is the code which the Samaritans acknowledged? The Pentateuch, and nothing but the Pentateuch. This they preserved, written indeed in a different character from that which the Jews use; they have in some few places altered it, to support the claim of their Temple to a precedence and a sacredness above the Temple at Jerusalem; but in all other respects it is precisely the same with the Pentateuch which is preserved by the Jews with the same scrupulous reverence, as of unquestioned divine authority. Does it then admit a doubt, that the code thus received by these two hostile nations, had been acknowledged by both as of divine authority before that hostility took place? I conclude, that the Pentateuch was the known sacred Law of the Jews before the Babylonish Captivity commenced, about 580 years before our Saviour's birth.

Further: An argument of a similar nature brings us through a period of 377 years, and establishes the authority of the Pentateuch, from the destruction of the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonish Captivity, back to its separation from the kingdom of Israel under the son and immediate successor of Solomon. From the revolt of the ten tribes,

tribes, it became the decided political interest of their monarchs, to alienate them as far as possible from the religion and the Temple of the monarch of Jerusalem. c The very first king of Israel discerned this interest, and prosecuted it to the utmost of his power, without the least scruple as to the religious or moral consequences of the means which he determined to adopt; for "Jeroboam* "said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return "to the house of David, if this people go up to do "sacrifice in the House of the Lord at Jerusalem; "then shall the heart of this people turn again unto "their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, "and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam "king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, "and made two calves of gold, and said unto the "people, It is too much for you to go up to Jeru-"salem: behold thy Gods O Israel, which brought "thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he made "an house of high places, and made priests of the "lowest of the people, which were not of the sons "of Levi: and he ordained a feast in the eighth "month, like unto the feast which is in Judah; "and he placed in Bethel the priests which he had "made." Such was the design of the first king of Israel; a design almost uniformly adhered to by all his successors. Now, to the full and secure completion of this design, the Pentateuch interposes the great obstacle. It allows no such separation of the tribes;

* 1 Kings, xii. 26.

tribes; it supposes them all united in one confederate body, governed by the same common counsel, recognizing one High Priest, by whom they were to consult the oracle, and commands all the males of the twelve tribes to repair three times a year to their common Temple, to join in a common form of worship, in adoration of their common God. This system was therefore entirely unfavourable to the views of the kings of Israel. If, then, its authority had not been acknowledged before the separation of the two kingdoms, would these monarchs, so watchful and so politic in guarding their separate sway, have permitted it to be introduced and received, to be fabricated and imposed upon the whole Jewish race, and published before the face of that part of it which they governed, as the system which both nations when united had acknowledged as of divine authority? Would they, I say, have permitted all this, without making one effort to detect and expose an imposition so flagrant in itself, and so injurious to them? Nay, more, would they, in the very act of forming a new system of worship, while they indulged the gross ideas and idolatrous propensities of their people, by representing the true God under idolatrous symbols; would they at that very moment have imitated the rites and fasts, and sacrifices, of that very code, whose influence they wished to undermine; * "ordaining a feast in the "eighth month like unto the feast which is in "Judah?"

* 1 Kings, xii. 32.

"Judah?" Assuredly not, except that code had been previously and universally admitted as of divine original, which they knew their subjects had been long habituated to reverence and obey. I conclude from hence, that the authority of the Pentateuch was acknowledged antecedent to the separation of the kingdom of Israel and Judah, above 970 years before the birth of Christ.

But perhaps it may be asserted, That the support which the Pentateuch gives to the claims of the kings of Judah, renders it probable that it may have been compiled for the purpose of favouring their views; and that perhaps its authority was rejected by the kings of Israel and their subjects, though the history of their opposition is now lost; the kingdom of Judah having long survived that of Israel, and reunited all the Hebrews under one common government, and having perhaps taken care to obliterate all records that could justify the past or lead to a future separation. To this I answer, that the Samaritans, who, though hostile to the Jews, acknowledged the Pentateuch, succeeded to the ten tribes in the possession of their country; that they were intermingled with their posterity; and that it is not possible such a circumstance could have taken place, as that the original Samaritans should have rejected the Law which the Jews received, and for a series of 230 years should have combated its authority; and that immediately after their successors should have received this Law, and

this

this only, as of divine original, without preserving the least trace of its ever having been disputed; though an hostility as strong subsisted between them and the restored Jews, as had before the Captivity divided the separate kingdoms.

Two particular examples, deserving peculiar attention, occur in the Jewish history, of the public and solemn homage paid to the sacredness of the Mosaic Law as promulgated in the Pentateuch, and by consequence affording the fullest testimony to the authenticity of the Pentateuch itself: the one in the reign of Hezekiah, while the separate kingdoms of Judah and Israel still subsisted; and the other in the reign of his great grandson Josiah, subsequent to the Captivity of Israel. In the former we see the pious monarch of Judah * assembling the Priests and Levites and the rulers of the people, to deplore with him the trespasses of their fathers against the divine Law, to acknowledge the justice of those chastisements which according to the prophetic warnings of that Law had been inflicted upon them, to open the House of God which his father had impiously shut, and restore the true worship therein according to the Mosaic Ritual; with the minutest particulars of which he complied, in the Sin Offerings and the Peace Offerings which in conjunction with his people he offered, for the kingdom and the sanctuary and the people, to make atonement to God for them, and for all Israel; restoring the service

* 2 Kings, ch. xviii. 2 Chron. ch. xxix & xxx.

service of God as it had been performed in the purest times. "And Hezekiah" (says the sacred narrative*) "rejoiced, and all the people, that God "had prepared the people: for the thing was done "suddenly;" immediately on the king's accession to the throne on the first declaration of his pious resolution. How clear a proof does this exhibit, of the previous existence and clearly acknowledged authority of those Laws which the Pentateuch contains.

But a yet more remarkable part of this transaction still remains: At this time Hoshea was king of Israel, and so far disposed to countenance the worship of the true God, that he appears to have made no opposition to the pious zeal of Hezekiah; who with the concurrence of the whole congregation he had assembled, sent out letters and made a proclamation, not only to his own people of Judah †, "but "to Ephraim and Manasseh and all Israel, from "Beersheba even unto Dan, that they should come "to the House of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep "the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel; say-"ing, ‡ Ye children of Israel, turn again to the "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he "will return to the remnant of you who are escaped "out of the hands of the kings of Assyria; and be "not ye like your fathers and your brethren, which "trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, "who therefore gave them up to desolation as ye "see."

* 2 Chron. xxix. 36. † Ib. xxx. 1. ‡ Ib. xxx. 6. &c.

" see. Now be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers " were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and " enter into his sanctuary which he hath sanctified " for ever, and serve the Lord your God, that the " fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. " So the posts passed from city to city through the " country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto " Zebulun."

Now can we conceive that such an attempt as this could have been made, if the Pentateuch containing the Mosaic code had not been as certainly recognized through the ten tribes of Israel as in the kingdom of Judah? The success was exactly such as we might reasonably expect if it were so acknowledged; for, though many of the ten tribes laughed to scorn and mocked the messengers of Hezekiah, who invited them to the solemnity of the Passover, from the impious contempt which through long disuse they had conceived for it; " Nevertheless," says the sacred narrative*, " divers of Asher and " Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves " and came to Jerusalem; and there assembled at " Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of un- " leavened bread in the second month, a very great " congregation: and they killed the Passover, and " the Priests and Levites stood in their places after " their manner, according to the Law of Moses the " man of God. So there was great joy in Jerusalem; " for since the time of Solomon the son of David

* 2 Chron. xxx. 11.

" king of Israel, there was not the like at Jeru-
" salem; * and when all this was finished, all Israel
" that were present went out to the cities of Judah,
" and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the
" groves, and threw down the high places and the
" altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim
" also and Manasseh, until they had utterly de-
" stroyed them all." Can any clearer proof than this be desired, of the constant and universal acknowledgment of the divine authority of the Pentateuch throughout the entire nation of the Jews, notwithstanding the idolatries and corruptions which so often prevented its receiving such obedience as that acknowledgment ought to have produced?

Not less remarkable was the solemn recognition of the divine authority of the Pentateuch by king Josiah and the whole people of the Jews, whose pious monarch while he was " yet † young, began " to seek after the God of David his father," destroying idols and banishing idolatry throughout the entire extent of his dominions, and proceeding to repair the House of the Lord, that he might restore his worship with due solemnity.

On this occasion, says the narrative, when they brought out the money that had been brought into the House of the Lord (to receive which they had probably opened the most secret and secure place for a deposit in the Temple) ‡ " the priests found " a book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses," (more

* 2 Chron. xxxi. † Ib. xxxiv. 3. ‡ Ib. xxxiv. 14.

(more accurately by the hand of Moses, possibly the sacred autograph of Moses himself originally deposited in the Ark); "and Hilkiah said to Sha-"phan the scribe, I have found the book of the "Law in the House of the Lord, and he delivered "the book to Shaphan, who read it before the "king."

The passage read, seems to have been that part of Deuteronomy which contains the prophetic declarations of the Lawgiver against the future apostasies of his people, which were so awful and severe as to excite the utmost terror in the young and pious monarch*, "for he rent his clothes, and sent "to enquire of the Lord concerning the words of "the book that is found; for great is the wrath of "the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our "forefathers have not kept the word of the Lord, "to do all that is written in this book." And Huldah the prophetess, who was consulted, declared that God would certainly fulfil the denunciations of that book; but yet that, in consequence of the humiliation and repentance of the king, "he should "be gathered to the grave in peace, neither should "his eyes see all the evil which God would bring "upon Jerusalem. And the king," continues the narrative†, "went up into the House of the "Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inha-"bitants of Jerusalem, and the Priests and the "Levites, and all the people great and small, and "he

* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 19, &c. † Ib. xxxiv. 30.

" he read in their ears all the words of the book of " the Covenant that was found in the House of the " Lord. And the king stood in his place and made " a Covenant before the Lord, to walk after the " Lord, and to keep his commandments and his " testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and " with all his soul, to perform the words of the " Covenant which were written in this book; and " he caused all them that were present in Jerusalem " and Benjamin to stand to it: and the inhabitants " of Jerusalem did according to the Covenant of " their God, the God of their fathers."

The sacred history proceeds to detail the particular circumstances of the Levites being employed in their due courses*, and the solemn celebration of the Passover, " as it is written in the book of the " Covenant;" and there was no such Passover, says the history, kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the Prophet: probably because the recent captivity of the ten tribes awakened the fears and secured the universal concurrence of all Judah and Israel, who were present, as well as of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; who now concurred with the king†, " to " perform the words of the Law, which were " written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found " in the House of the Lord." Which could not possibly have been any other than the Pentateuch of Moses; probably the very copy written by himself.

These

* 2 Chron. xxxv. 18. † 2 Kings, xxiii. 24.

These facts and arguments seem sufficiently decisive: they may be confirmed by another argument from the internal structure of the Pentateuch, which I do not recollect to have seen noticed; and which not only meets this objection, but goes further, and seems to prove it highly improbable that the Pentateuch should have been compiled and received, if of a late date or doubtful authority, during any period of the regal government in Judah. The argument is this, That the civil form of government which the Pentateuch exhibits, IS NOT REGAL; it is indeed of a very singular kind: says the judicious Lowman *, "It will easily appear, that the general "union of the tribes as one body, may be conceived "after this manner: that the congregation of Israel "or the whole people, enacted by themselves or "their representatives; that the great council advised "consulted and proposed; that the judge presided "in their councils, and had the chief hand in execu- "ting what was resolved in them; and that Jehovah, "by the oracle, was to assent to and approve what "was resolved, and authorize the execution of it "in matters of the greatest importance to the whole "state. So that the general union of the whole "nation may not improperly be thus expressed, It "was by the command of the people, and advice of "the senate; the judge presiding, and the oracle "approving." The Jewish government was, therefore,

* Vide Lowman on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, ch. vii.

fore, what no other ever was, A THEOCRACY; in which the last appeal was to Jehovah himself, expressing his will by the oracle; and in which there was no power either to make or repeal new Laws, the Laws of the nation being the Laws of Jehovah. We must also observe, that the judge was rather an occasional than a constant magistrate, nominated, or at least approved by the oracle; never invested with authority for more than his own life, and without the least idea of an hereditary right.

Further: The Mosaic code does not merely appoint a constitution, of which kingly government was no part; but it notices this government as an innovation which the people would introduce, after the example of the surrounding nations; and it lays the kings under restraints which were equally irksome to their sensuality and their ambition*. "He shall not multiply wives unto himself, that his "heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly "multiply to himself silver and gold; neither shall "he multiply horses to himself, nor cause the "people to return into Egypt, to the end that he "should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord "hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no "more that way." And the Law of Moses was to be in every point his guide; "and it shall be," saith the legislator, "when he sitteth upon the throne of "his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of "this Law in a book, out of that which is before "th.

* Deuteronomy, xvii. 16, &c.

"the Priests and the Levites; and it shall be with "him, and he shall read therein all the days of his "life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, "to keep all the words of this Law and these "statutes to do them." When the Jews first solicited from Samuel * a king, after they had lived near 400 years under their original form of government, he was displeased, and represented this demand as in some degree a rejection of God as their king; and he stated in strong terms the oppressions and the mischiefs they should suffer under the kingly government. Now it is remarkable, that the restraints imposed by the Mosaic Law were grossly and fatally violated by Solomon, the most renowned and powerful of the Jewish kings.

On this fact then I argue, that if the Mosaic Law had not been universally known and revered as of divine authority long before the time of Samuel, it could never have been compiled and received during the kingly government: he would not have ventured to oppose the wishes of the people in appointing a king, on the pretext of its being a rejection of God for their king; nor would he have attempted to impose such restraints on the monarchs of the Jews, if unsupported by a previously admitted authority: such a fabrication, would never have escaped detection and exposure, either by Saul, who for the last years of his life was in constant enmity with Samuel; or by Solomon, who amidst his

* 1 Samuel, viii. 10.

his power and prosperity must have felt his fame wounded, and his passions rebuked, by the stern condemnation of the Mosaic Law. The preceding argument shews the extreme improbability of a supposition which has been sometimes resorted to, that Samuel was the compiler of the Pentateuch.

We have now ascended to within less than 400 years from the promulgation of the Mosaic Law; a period during which the Jews had lived in the uninterrupted possession of the land in which they were settled by Moses and his immediate successor; and without any fundamental alteration in the form of that government under which they were originally placed; and if we have reason to believe that the Pentateuch was admitted as the true system of the Mosaic Law at the close of that period, no possible æra during its continuance can be pointed out, at which the fabrication of such a code may be supposed probable or so much as credible: no motive or circumstance can be assigned as the origin of such a fabrication, or to account for the ready and universal credit which it must have obtained; no body of men, even no individual can be discovered, whose interest it was to form such a fabrication, or who could have had an influence sufficiently powerful and permanent to give it currency.

The history of the Jews proves indeed that they were very far from adhering strictly to the Mosaic Law during that period: we find that they frequently violated it in the grossest manner, and fell into

into great disorders and idolatries, and in consequence suffered great calamities. But what was the general effect of these calamities? That they repented of their disobedience, and again submitted to the Law of Moses as the Law of God. Now would this have been natural, if they entertained any doubts of the authenticity of the code containing that Law? Would the people and the rulers and the priests, on the authority of a new compilation, have received as the ancient constitutions of the land, laws and customs they had never before heard of, which condemned the vices and idolatries of every class in the strongest terms, and threatened them with the severest punishments? Surely this is utterly improbable: that prosperity should corrupt a nation, and lead it to neglect the most sacred obligations, is credible; that, though corrupted and depraved, calamity should rouse them to repentance, is also credible; but that they should ascribe their calamities to the violation of a Law whose authority they had never acknowledged, that in the midst of vice and corruption a new code should be fabricated, condemning that vice and corruption, and imposed upon the nation as the known Law of their fathers without opposition, is surely most improbable and strange.

We are not, however, driven to rest the universal reception of the Pentateuch on presumptive arguments or probable conjecture alone: we have the most decisive and uninterrupted, the most positive and

and direct external testimony. "We have a number of different tracts, acknowledged by the Jews as not only genuine, but divine: these works are, the latest of them, written during or shortly after the Babylonish Captivity, as their very language indicates; they take up the history of the Jews from that period, and carry it regularly back to their first settlement in their country by Joshua the successor of Moses, and thus bring us into contact with the legislator himself. They are to a certainty written by a great variety of persons and for very different purposes; some of them plain histories, and almost chronological annals; others of them prophetical and mysterious; others poetical and popular; hymns in praise of God, his providence, and laws, or celebrating great national events, or deploring national calamities. And all these multiplied and various compositions unite in presupposing the existence and the truth of the Pentateuch, and uniformly refer to and quote it as the only true and genuine account of the ancient history and known laws of the Jews: they recite its facts, they refer to its laws, they celebrate its author; they appeal to the people, to the kings, to the priests; they rebuke and threaten them for neglecting the Mosaic Law as it is contained in the Pentateuch; and what is most decisive, they never once give the least hint of any rival Law, of any new compilation, of any doubt as to its authenticity. To quote from all would be as unnecessary as it

would be tedious. I will adduce one or two testimonies from the book of Joshua, the immediate successor of Moses, which will I trust be satisfactory and decisive.

When Joshua is represented as receiving the divine commission to undertake the command of the Jews, it was on this condition*: "Only be "thou strong, and very courageous, that thou "mayest observe to do according to all the Law "which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn "not from it to the right hand or to the left, that "thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. "This book of the Law shall not depart out of "thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day "and night, that thou mayest observe to do "according to all that is written therein." When he had conquered a considerable part of the promised land, we find him forming a great assembly of the people, in compliance with the direction of the Law: And he "built an altar "unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, "as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded "the Children of Israel, as it is written in the "book of the Law of Moses†, an altar of whole "stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: "and they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto "the Lord, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And he "wrote on the stones a copy of the Law of Moses, "which he wrote in the presence of the Children "of

* Josh. i. 7. † Ib. viii. 30.

" of Israel*. And all Israel, and their elders and " officers, and their judges, stood on this side the " Ark and on that side, before the Priests and the " Levites which bare the Ark of the Covenant of the " Lord, as well the stranger as he that was born " among them; half of them over against Mount " Gerizzin, and half of them over against Mount " Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had com- " manded before, that they should bless the people " of Israel. And afterwards he read all the words " of the Law, the blessings and cursings, according " to all that is written in the book of the Law: " there was not a word of all that Moses com- " manded, which Joshua read not before all the " congregation of Israel, with the women, and the " little ones, and the strangers that were conversant " among them."

Such was the solemn promulgation of the Mosaic Law, at the very commencement of the settlement of the Jews in the land of their inheritance; and in every subsequent transaction of Joshua we find he acted according to the same Law†: "As the Lord

* This, as Mr. Locke observes, is evidently a completion of the direction in Deuteronomy, ch. xxvii. And the Law engraven on the plastered stones now set up, was no more than the decalogue itself, or the formula of blessing and cursing in confirmation of the decalogue, contained in twelve verses of that chapter, and to be solemnly pronounced by the twelve tribes assembled for that purpose at the erection of this public monument of the solemn public reading and recognition of the Mosaic Law.

† Joshua xi. 15.

" Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did " Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he " left nothing undone of all that the Lord com- " manded Moses." Moses had appointed the mode of distributing the land among the tribes, and according to his command was the mode adopted. He commanded the Levites should have no inheritance in land, and no inheritance was given them: he commanded that six cities of refuge for him who had been unintentionally guilty of manslaughter should be appointed, and they were appointed: he commanded that eight-and-forty cities should be given to the Levites out of the different tribes, by lot, and they were so given. When the conquest of the land was completed and the people had rest, the soldiers of the two tribes and a half, whom Moses had planted east of Jordan, wished to be dismissed to their families; Joshua dismissed them with this panegyric and this charge*: " Ye have kept all " that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded " you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I " commanded you; therefore now return ye, and " get ye unto your tents, and unto the land of your " possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord " gave you on the other side Jordan. But take dili- " gent heed to do the commandment and the Law " which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, " to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his " ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave

* Joshua xxii. 2. 4. 5.

" unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and " with all your soul." And, to close all, when Joshua was old, and was conscious of his approaching death, he " called for all Israel, and for their Elders, and " for their Heads, and for their Judges, and for " their Officers;" he recounts the benefits of God, he recapitulates the history and the warnings of the Pentateuch, and commanded them, " Be ye " therefore very courageous to keep and to do all " that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, " that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right " hand or to the left. And the people said unto " Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve and his " voice will we obey: So Joshua made a covenant " with the people that day, and set them a statute " and an ordinance in Shechem; and Joshua " wrote these words in the book of the Law of " God, and set up a monument of the transaction " by the sanctuary of the Lord *." Now, what was this book of the Law? Undoubtedly the same of which it is said, that " when Moses had made an " end of writing the words of the Law in a book, " until they were finished; he commanded the " Levites, and said, Take this book of the Law, and " put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of " the Lord your God, that it may be a witness " against you." That book which he commanded to be read before all Israel, at the end of every seven

* Joshua, xxiii. 2. 6. xxiv. 24—26. Vide the entire twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters.

seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles. This surely must have been the same with that which the Jews have received, from the present hour back to the Babylonish Captivity: which must have preceded that event, because it is also received by the hostile Samaritans, who were planted in Judea at the commencement of the Captivity; which must have preceded the division of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, because it was acknowledged in both; which must have preceded the establishment of the kings, because it supposes no such form of government, but rather condemns it. In a word, that book of the Law, which every writer and every sect amongst the Jews have quoted and acknowledged, in every possible form of quotation and acknowledgment, from the present period back to the immediate successor of Moses himself, who solemnly attests its authenticity and divine original. I trust, therefore, I have sufficiently established the introductory point I wished to prove; even that the Jewish nation has received the Pentateuch, as containing an authentic account of the conduct and institutions of their celebrated legislator, from the very æra when these institutions commenced.

PART I.

LECTURE II.

The Authenticity and Truth of the four last books of the Pentateuch, proved from the subject and structure of the history, so far as the facts are not miraculous—Importance and peculiar nature of its various regulations concerning property—Publicity and importance of the main series of facts—Marks of truth in the minute detail of these facts—Simplicity of style and narrative—Selection and arrangement of facts and circumstances, such as is natural if Moses were the writer, unaccountable otherwise—Impartiality—Comparison of the Pentateuch, in this respect, with Josephus.

PART I.

LECT. II.

DEUTERONOMY, xxxi. 9.

"And Moses wrote all this Law, and delivered it unto the "Priests the Sons of Levi, and unto all the Elders of "Israel."

IT is the object of these Lectures, to prove the divine original of that Law which the Jewish legislator is stated to have thus solemnly delivered to his nation. The four last books of the Pentateuch contain this Law, and the history of the facts on which its authority is founded; it is therefore necessary to prove that these books are genuine, and the history they relate true. The proof of this may be deduced, either from the external testimony by which their truth and genuineness is supported; or from the internal structure of the works themselves. The former topic I have already noticed, and endeavoured to shew that these books have been received by the Jews from the very first settlement of their nation, as containing an authentic and faithful account of their Lawgiver and his institutions. And if they have been so received, we can scarcely

doubt

doubt the truth of the facts which they detail; for it must be remembered that the history does not relate the origin of the Jews as a nation, after a length of time had elapsed, when we might suppose fiction may have been employed to conceal the weakness or the barbarism of its infancy; but that it was published and received while these events were transacting, or immediately after they had taken place; and that it was incorporated with the system of Laws by which the religion of the people was from the very first regulated; on which their liberties were founded; by which the rights and privileges of every class and every profession were adjusted; and, above all, by which the distribution and the descent of property were determined. We may also remark, that the nature of several Laws concerning property was such, that if they had not been enacted before its distribution among the people, and established as the tenure and condition on which it was held, their introduction at any subsequent period would have excited a great ferment and great opposition. Such was the Law of release from all debts and all personal servitude every seventh year*; and that Law which ordered, that if the property of any family had been alienated by sale, it should be restored to the family every fiftieth year, or year of Jubilee. All who know the commotions, which attempts to discharge debts and change the distribution of property have always

* Vide Deuteronomy xv. and Leviticus xxv.

excited, and who recollect the examples of Sparta, Athens, and Rome, in this matter, will be sensible that a code containing such regulations as these could not have been established as the regular Law of the Jewish state, without opposition, except before the distribution of property, and as the condition on which it was held; and therefore before the settlement of the Jews in the land of their inheritance.

Another regulation as to property occurs in Leviticus, of a singular kind: "When," (says the Lawgiver*) "ye shall come into the land, and shall "have planted all manner of trees for food; then "ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised: "three years shall it be as uncircumcised unto you: "it shall not be eaten of. But in the fourth year all "the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the Lord "withal. And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the "fruit thereof: I am the Lord your God." Now, would such a regulation as this have been observed, if it had not been established on clear authority before the Jews took possession of the promised land? And if it never had been established and observed, what motive could have induced a fictitious writer to load his account with so improbable and so apparently † useless a circumstance? Does it

* Leviticus, xix. 23—25.

† It was not, I am persuaded, really useless; it may have been to give the trees age and strength, and to give the eaters a knowledge of what was wholesome or otherwise, which, after their long detention in the desert, they might not be sufficiently acquainted with.

it not, therefore, supply a presumptive argument, that the system of which it forms a part, was known and received by the Jewish nation before their settlement in the promised land?

I now proceed to confirm the conclusion thus derived from the testimony of the Jewish nation, still further, by considering the internal structure of the history itself. If the Pentateuch is not the work of Moses, it is a forgery imposed upon the nation in his name. It is totally impossible this should have been done during the life of the legislator, or immediately after his death, during the lives of his cotemporaries. If then the Pentateuch was not the original record of Moses himself, it was the work of some compiler in a period long subsequent, who assumed the character and wrote in the name of the Jewish Lawgiver, to answer some design different from genuine truth. And if so, we can hardly fail of discerning in the texture of the work itself, marks of a compilation long subsequent to the facts it relates. We cannot but perceive some traces of the particular purpose for which it was composed. If it was calculated to obtain fame for its author, as an elaborate and beautiful composition, this will appear in its style and sentiments; if it was intended to falsify the history in order to gratify personal vanity, party interest or national pride, this will be discernible. Let us then examine whether the four last books of the Pentateuch are liable to any such suspicions as these. Are the facts and

institutions

institutions which they contain, so public and important, that we cannot suppose any account of them materially false could at any time be fabricated and imposed upon the nation? And if this be so evident that we must admit the main substance of the history to be true, yet can we be sure of truth in its minuter detail? Does this relation bear in it the marks of simplicity and undesignedness, of impartiality and sincerity? Does it exhibit such particularity, and exact suitableness to the different situations in which the author is supposed to have been placed, as indicate a writer engaged in the transactions he describes, and recording them from his own personal knowledge with exact fidelity? And finally, are the miraculous facts of the history so blended with and so necessary to the common events, and related with such clear characters of simplicity and reality, as to form one inseparable, uniform, and consistent narrative, evidently dictated by nature and truth?

On the most cursory perusal of the four last books of the Pentateuch, it seems most evident that the main facts (considering at present only such as were *not supernatural)* were so public, so singular, and so important, affecting in their consequences the most valuable rights and interests of every order of society, nay almost of every individual; that we cannot suppose any man could have ventured to fabricate a false account of them, and have been successful in gaining for such a fabrication that

universal credit and permanent authority, which it has been proved the Pentateuch certainly obtained amongst the Jews from the very commencement of their state. The rapid *increase of the Jews in Egypt; the severe oppression they sustained there; the treasure, cities and other public works raised by their labours; above all, the cruel edict to destroy all their male children, in order gradually and totally to exterminate the nation; all these were facts, which must have been engraven on the hearts and handed down in the traditions of every Hebrew family: nor were the † circumstances which led to their departure from the land of bondage, less public and notorious. On the first application of Moses, united with the Elders of Israel, to Pharaoh, intreating him to permit their departure, he was so incensed as to increase the severities under which they laboured, by a public order rigorously enforced throughout the land. The people complain heavily of this new grievance, many public interviews take place between the Jewish Lawgiver and the Egyptian monarch: at length the obstinacy of the latter is overcome, he not only permits the Jews to retire, but his ‡people are eager to implore and hasten their departure. The Hebrews§ demand of the Egyptians gold and silver and jewels, and the Egyptians comply with the demand; the nation emigrates in a great

* Exod. i. † Ibid. v.

‡ Ibid. xii. 33.

§ Exod. xii. 35. Compare Exod. iii. 21.

great body: Pharaoh soon repents his having permitted them to retire, and pursues them with the chief force of his kingdom; the Jews notwithstanding escape, Pharaoh and his host are destroyed. * Moses, instead of leading his people the shortest way to the land which they hoped to possess, detains them † forty years, marching or encamped in the wilderness of Arabia. At the ‡ commencement of this period, he lays down a code of religious institutions and civil Laws; he builds a tabernacle of great expence and elaborate structure for divine worship, to which all the nation contributed; he sets apart a tribe for divine service, and for instructing the people in religion. At the § close of their abode in the wilderness, Moses recapitulates all the Laws which he had before delivered in detail, and appeals to the people in attestation of the different events which had befallen them. He prescribes the mode in which they should divide the land they were proceeding to conquer ‖; they take possession of so much of it as lay east of Jordan ¶; and before they proceed to the conquest of the rest, their legislator dies, having shortly before his death composed a popular song or hymn **, which

* Exod. xiv.

† Compare Numb. xiv. 33. and Deut. i. 3.

‡ Vide Exodus and Leviticus, passim.

§ Vide Deut. i.

‖ Numb. xxxiii. 54. Deut. xix. 3. Compare Josh. xviii.

¶ Numb. xxxii.

** Deut. xxxii. Compare xxxi. 21.

which he "spake in the ears of all the congrega-
"tion of Israel, and taught it them, that it should
"not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed,
"but testify against them," if they should attempt to forsake the Law and the God of their fathers.

Such is the series of facts which the four last books of the Pentateuch detail, separated from the miracles to which many of them are ascribed. Now can we believe that these facts were not true, and yet that the Jewish nation should have universally received them as such? Let it be remembered that this history does not recount the origin and growth of an infant colony, or the emigration of a savage horde, but the march of a numerous nation; for they* "journeyed about 600,000 men, besides
"women and children; and a mixed multitude went
"up also with them, and flocks and herds, and very
"much cattle." While the magnificent structure of their tabernacle, the distribution of property, the tribe of the Levites set apart for ministers of divine worship and for public instructors, and the code of their religious and civil institutions, prove that a great degree of civilization prevailed amongst the Jews at the very time when these facts were said to have taken place. Now can we believe a nation so great and so civilized were universally and palpably deceived as to a whole series of facts, so public and important as this history details?

If then the leading events of the Pentateuch were

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* Exod. xii. 37. & 38.

so public, so momentous, and so recent, that the history detailing them could have found no credit had it not been true; if the laws and institutions it contains were so important, and of such a singular nature, that had they not been derived from unquestioned authority they could never have been adopted; it remains to enquire how far the relation carries with it marks of truth, even in its minutest detail.

Now in this view, the first character of the Pentateuch which strikes us, is the perfect *artlessness and simplicity of its style and structure.* Writers mix fiction with truth, either to form a beautiful and engaging composition, or to gratify some particular interest or passion; in either case it is impossible but the object always uppermost in the mind of the writer should frequently discover itself to the attentive reader: if to please and interest be his design, this will appear by his selecting such circumstances as are adapted to affect the passions and impress the imagination, and by his keeping out of the way, as far as is consistent with probability, every thing tediously minute and uninteresting. We shall find sometimes the sublime and sometimes the pathetic resorted to: in a word, the design will appear in the entire structure of the work, and in the effect which is evidently intended to be produced upon the mind. It is not unimportant to remark, that had this been the object of the writer of the Pentateuch, he undoubtedly might have pursued it with considerable

success.

success. In the triumphant *hymn which he has inserted on the deliverance of the terrified Israelites from the host of Pharaoh, we discover a boldness and sublimity of composition seldom excelled. In the †address to the assembled nation, supposed to be delivered by Moses shortly before his death; in the blessings promised for obedience, and the curses denounced against offenders; and especially in the song he taught the people, recapitulating the wonders of God's providence which they had witnessed, and the judgments they might expect; we discover a judicious selection of striking circumstances, strong imagery, pathetic appeals to the tenderest feelings, and the authoritative language of the legislator and the prophet combined so aptly, as prove the writer fully capable of commanding most powerfully the attention, and interesting the heart.

But nothing is more evident in the entire structure of the Pentateuch, than its being written without the least effort to form an elaborate and engaging history, an impressive and beautiful composition. A writer who had such a design, would have separated the history from the Laws; the former he would have related with such a selection of circumstances as would most interest and affect his reader; the latter he would have delivered in some regular system, and avoided minute detail and frequent repetitions.

* Exod. xv.

† Vide Deut. iv. to ix.; also from xxvi. to xxxiii.; particularly xxxii. & xxxiii.

repetitions. On the contrary, the author of the Pentateuch proceeds in such an order as was indeed most natural to a writer relating the different occurrences which took place, exactly as they took place; but which renders his work exceedingly irregular, and even tedious as a composition. The history in Exodus is perpetually interrupted with exact details of the Laws as they were occasionally delivered; with minute and even tedious, though necessary descriptions of the materials and work of the tabernacle and its furniture, of the altar, the ark, the dress of the priests, and the mode of offering the sacrifices; these are detailed in the most inartificial manner, if we consider the book as intended for a finished or interesting composition. The description of the method * in which these things should be formed, is spread through near six chapters; then the history proceeds for five more; and then succeeds a relation of the fact, that each particular directed to be made was made according to the direction given, in most cases word for word the same as the direction, and this extended through five long chapters. The measures of the curtains, and the boards, and the borders; the number and size of the rings and the loops, of the tenons, and the pillars, and the sockets, of the curtains and the hangings; are enumerated with such exactness, as proves the detail was not at all designed to display in strong

* Exod. from xxv. to xxx. both included; also from xxxvi. to xl.

strong and glowing colours the magnificence of the objects described; for such a purpose it is totally unfit, but it is exactly such as was necessary to instruct the workmen in the making of them. Now, I argue, that all this is just and natural, if Moses was really the author of Exodus, and if he detailed the circumstances at the time when they occurred; because he conceived the formation of all this work according to a particular model*, as a matter of important obligation, and worthy a peculiar record, when he tells us†, that "According to all that the "Lord commanded Moses, so the Children of "Israel made all the work: And Moses blessed "them." But such an enumeration would have been utterly irrational and unnatural in any other writer, or for any other purpose.

Additional proofs, that the writer of the Pentateuch was careless of ornament, and attentive to objects which no mere inventor of a fiction would have thought of, and no compiler even of a true history, who designed to interest and amuse his readers, would have dwelt on, may be derived from the manner‡ in which the rules about sacrifices, the distinctions of meats clean and unclean, the different modes of contracting pollution, and the rules about purification, and in particular, about the symptoms and the cure of leprosy, are detailed. We must not forget that these rules continued to be observed amongst

* Exod. xxv. 8, 9, & 40. † Exod. xxxix. 42 & 43.

‡ In Deut. the first twenty-three chapters.

amongst the Jews; that they are so minute, they could scarcely have been remembered distinctly for any length of time, if they had not been written; that this account of them must therefore have been published very soon after they were first observed; that many of them are so tedious and burdensome, that they would not have been submitted to, if the authority inculcating them had been at all doubtful; in short, if they had not been inculcated by the same authority which regulated the rest of that religious and civil system of which they form a part. It follows, that they were observed from the time when the Jewish Lawgiver established his code, and that they were published either by him, or immediately after him.

The frequent genealogies* which occur in the Pentateuch, form another strong presumptive proof that it was composed by a writer of a very early date, and from original materials. The genealogies of the Jewish tribes were not mere arbitrary lists of names, in which the writer might insert as many fictitious ones as he pleased, retaining only some few more conspicuous names of existing families, to preserve an appearance of their being founded in reality; but they were a complete enumeration of all the original stocks, from some one of which every family in the Jewish nation derived its origin, and in which no name was to be inserted, whose descendants

* Vide Numb. ch. i. ii. & iii. and especially ch. xxvi. & xxxiv.

descendants or heirs did not exist in possession of the property which the original family had possessed at the first division of the promised land. The distribution of property by tribes and families proves, some such catalogues of families as we find in the Pentateuch must have existed at the very first division of the country; these must have been carefully preserved, because the property of every family was unalienable, since, if sold, it was to return to the original family at each year of Jubilee. The genealogies of the Pentateuch, if they differed from this known and authentic register, would have been immediately rejected, and with them, the whole work. They therefore impart to the entire history all the authenticity of such a public register; for surely it is not in the slightest degree probable, that the Pentateuch should ever have been received as the original record of the settlement and division of Judea, if so important a part of it as the register of the genealogies had been known to exist long before its publication, and to have been merely copied into it from pre-existing documents.

Again, we may make a similar observation on the geographical enumerations of places in the Pentateuch*; the accounts constantly given, of their deriving their names from particular events and particular persons; and on the details of marches and encampments

* Vide Exod. xiv. 2. xv. 27. xvii. 7. And compare Numbers, ch. xx. xxi. and xxxiii. xxxiv. xxxv.; also Deut. i. ii. iii.

encampments which occur, first in the progress of the direct narrative, when only some few stations distinguished by remarkable facts are noticed, and afterwards at its close,[o] where a regular list is given of all the stations of the Jewish camp. All this looks like reality: whenever the Pentateuch was published, it would have been immediately rejected, except the account it gives of the origin of these names, and of the series of these marches, had been known to be true by the Jews in general; for the book states, that many of these names were adopted in consequence of these events, from the very time they took place; and it also states, that the entire nation was engaged in these marches. Now, the memory of such circumstances as these cannot long exist without writing. If the Pentateuch was not what it pretends to be, the original detail of these circumstances, it could not have been received; for, if it was published long after the events, and there was no pre-existing document of these details, which it delivers as things well known, how could it be received as true? If it was copied from a known pre-existing document, how could it be received as being itself the original? Besides, it is natural for the spectator of events to connect every circumstance with the place where it happened. An inventor of fiction would not venture upon this, as it would facilitate the detection of his falsehood; a compiler long subsequent would not trouble himself with it, except in some remarkable cases. The very

very natural and artless manner in which all circumstances of this nature are introduced in the Pentateuch, increases the probability of its being the work of an eye-witness, who could introduce them with ease, while to any body else it would be extremely difficult and therefore unnatural; since it would render his work much more laborious, without making it more instructive.

All these things bespeak a writer present at the transactions, deeply interested in them, recording each object as it was suggested to his mind by facts, conscious he had such authority with the persons to whom he wrote, as to be secure of their attention, and utterly indifferent as to style or ornament, and those various arts which are employed to fix attention and engage regard; which an artful forger would probably have employed, and a compiler of even a true history would not have judged beneath his attention. Now, though it does not at all follow, that where these arts are used, falsehood must exist; yet their absence greatly increases our confidence, that we shall meet nothing but truth. When the writer has no vanity, no anxiety about the eloquence or beauty of his composition; when he writes without art, without any solicitous selection of circumstances, to interest or gratify his reader; what can he design, but to instruct and inform? Must he not feel, that what he writes is true, and therefore ought to be told, and so important, that it is sure of being attended to?

But the most decisive character of truth in any history is its IMPARTIALITY; and here the author of the Pentateuch is distinguished perhaps above every historian in the world; whether we consider the manner in which he speaks of the Hebrew patriarchs, the Jewish nation in general, or of its legislator and his nearest relations. Of the patriarchs, he speaks in such a way as not only did not gratify the vanity of his countrymen, but such as must most severely wound their national pride: he ranks some of their ancestors very high indeed, as worshippers of the true God, and observers of his will, in the midst of a world rapidly degenerating into idolatry; yet there is not one of them (Joseph perhaps excepted) of whom he does not recount many weaknesses, which a zealous partisan would have been careful to suppress; and to many he imputes great crimes, which he never attempts to palliate or disguise. In this point, the advocates of infidelity may be appealed to as judges; they dwell upon the weaknesses and crimes of the patriarchs with great triumph; let them not deny then, that the scripture account of them is impartial and true in all its points, good as well as bad; and we fear not but it will be easily proved, that, notwithstanding their weaknesses and even crimes, they were upon the whole, and considering the moral and religious state of the human mind in that age, characters not unworthy of pardon and acceptance with God, and

fit instruments for the introduction of the divine dispensations.

Of the Jewish nation in general, the author of the Pentateuch speaks, it may be said, not only impartially, but even severely; he does not conceal the weakness and obscurity of their first origin, that "a Syrian ready to perish, was their father*;" nor their long and degrading slavery in Egypt; their frequent murmurings and criminal distrust of God, notwithstanding his many interpositions in their favour; their criminal apostasy, rebellion, and resolution to return to Egypt, first, when they erected the golden calf at Mount Sinai †; and next on the return of the spies from the land of Canaan, when they were so afraid of the inhabitants, that they durst not attack them ‡: he repeatedly reproaches the people with these crimes, and loads them with the epithets of stiffnecked, rebellious and idolatrous ‖: he inculcates upon them most emphatically, that it was not for their own righteousness that God gave them possession of the promised land: he declares to them his conviction, that in their prosperity they would again § relapse into their rebellions and idolatries, and imitate the foul vices of those nations whom God had driven out from before them for these very crimes. Here again we may appeal to the judgment of infidels; they triumph in the apostasies

* Deut. xxvi. 5. † Exod. xxxii. ‡ Numb. xiii. & xiv.

‖ Vide in particular Deut. ix. also Exod. xxxii.

§ Vide Deut. xxxi.

apostasies and crimes of the Jews, and represent them as totally unworthy the divine protection and regard: surely then they must confess, that the historian who has thus described them is strictly impartial; and that as he has concealed nothing that would disgrace, we may also be confident that he has feigned nothing to exalt his countrymen; and admitting this, we may easily shew that, notwithstanding the crimes and the stubbornness of the Jews, it was not yet unworthy of the divine wisdom to employ them as the medium of preserving the worship of the true God amidst an idolatrous world, and of preparing the way for the introduction of a pure and universal religion.

The impartiality of the author of the Pentateuch is not less remarkable in the mode in which he speaks of the nearest relations and connections of the Jewish Lawgiver. His brother * Aaron is related to have been engaged in the great crime of setting up the golden calf, to have joined with his † sister Miriam in an unjustifiable attack on the authority of Moses, and to have offended God so much, that he was excluded from the promised land: and the ‡ two eldest sons of Aaron are related to have been miraculously put to death by God himself, in consequence of their violating the ritual Law. The tribe and kindred of the Lawgiver are not represented as exempt from the criminal rebellion of

* Exod. xxxii. † Numb. xii.

‡ Numb. iii. 4. and Deut. x. 6.

of the Jews on the return of the twelve spies: Caleb and Joshua, who alone had opposed it, were of different tribes, one of Judah, and the other of Ephraim. In a word, nothing in the narrative of the Pentateuch exalts the character of any of the near relatives of Moses and Aaron, except only in the instance of *Phinehas the grandson of Aaron; who, for his zeal in restraining and punishing the licentiousness and idolatry into which the Midianitish women had seduced his countrymen, was rewarded by the high priesthood's being made hereditary in his family. Of the family of the legislator we are told nothing, but that his †father-in-law Jethro was a wise man, who suggested to Moses some regulations of utility: that his ‡wife was an Æthiopian woman, and as such the object of contempt and opposition even to his own brother and sister; and that he had two sons, of whom, or their families, the history takes no notice; so that nothing about them is known, but that they were undistinguished from the rest of the Levitical tribe. How different is all this from the embellishments of fiction or the exaggerations of vanity. How strongly does it carry with it the appearance of humility and truth.

The most decisive proof of impartiality is however found in the manner in which the Pentateuch speaks of Moses himself: to point out this more clearly, let us compare it with the account which Josephus has

* Numb. xxv. † Exod. xviii. ‡ Numb. xii. 1.

has compiled of the same facts: he, indeed, received the Pentateuch as authentic, true, and sacred; he therefore preserves all the leading events of its history; but he sometimes departs from its simple narrative, and in almost every instance of difference we shall perceive a wish, either to adorn with fictitious splendor the character of the Jewish Lawgiver, to encrease the credibility of his miracles in the eyes of the Gentiles, or to disguise and palliate the misconduct of his countrymen.

The entire account which the book of Exodus delivers of the private life of Moses, for the eighty years which preceded his divine mission to deliver the Israelites, is comprized in twenty-two verses *: all is plain and artless, full of the simplicity of patriarchal life, and unmixed with a single circumstance tending to exalt the personal character of the Lawgiver, or mark him out as peculiarly fitted for so high a destiny: but one action of his maturer years is mentioned, "that he went out unto his brethren, "and looked on their burdens: and he spied an "Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren" (probably attempting to murder him;) "and he "slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." When he finds the fact discovered, and that Pharaoh sought to slay him, he flies to Midian, marries, and remains there for a long series of years, unaspiring and unknown; till at the advanced age of fourscore, the divine command urges and compels

* Exod. ii.

compels him to become the instrument of executing the will of Heaven, in the deliverance of his nation.

Compare with this short and modest narrative, the embellishments which national vanity added in subsequent traditions, and which Josephus collected and adorned *. We are told that the sacred scribe of the Egyptians announces to their monarch, that about this time a child should be born to the Israelites, who would bring the Egyptian dominion low, and raise theirs; who would excel all men in virtue, and obtain a glory which would be remembered through all ages: and to the terror arising from this prediction (of which not one word occurs in the Pentateuch) Josephus ascribes the edict to put to death all the male children of the Hebrews. Nor is this all; the birth of this future hero and legislator of the Jews is granted to the prayers of his father, and announced to him also in a prophetic vision. Even his brother Aaron's fame, and his dignity as High Priest, is also prophesied.

The original narrative, with a beautiful simplicity, notices the very natural circumstance, "that "when the mother of Moses saw he was a goodly "child, she hid him three months." On this single expression Josephus raises the most extravagant description of the distinguished and captivating stature and beauty of his hero, and ascribes to this some of the most remarkable events with which he embellishes his life. His understanding too is represented

* Vide Josephus's Antiquities, B. II. ch. 2. xi.

represented as greater than his age; the sports of his childhood are eminous of his future exploits. When arrived to maturity, he is said to have been appointed general in a war with the Æthiopians, who had reduced Egypt to the extremest distress. His good conduct and success are represented as unparalleled, and such as to excite the most violent jealousy amongst the Egyptians, and especially to raise the envy and hatred of Pharaoh; and to this Josephus ascribes his flight into the land of Midian; after which he is compelled to adopt the narrative of the Pentateuch, which here becomes too particular, and on a subject too sacred, to allow any material deviation. Yet, even here, we find him in various minute circumstances suppressing and softening different particulars which appeared uncreditable to Moses, but which the Pentateuch puts forward with the most faithful exactness.

When the divine glory appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and commanded him to undertake the deliverance of his countrymen, the Jewish Lawgiver displays a degree of reluctance and distrust which surprises us*; after God had wrought three different miracles, and enabled him to repeat them, Moses replies, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, "neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to "thy servant: I am slow of speech, and of a slow "tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath "made man's mouth? have not I the Lord? Now "therefore

* Vide Exodus, iv.

"therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and "teach thee what thou shalt say." Yet even to this gracious assurance, Moses returns almost an absolute refusal to undertake the mission on any terms: for he said, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the "hand of him whom thou wilt send." We cannot be surprised to be told, that on this "the anger of the "Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is "not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he "can speak well: and I will be with thy mouth, and "with his mouth; and he shall be thy spokesman un- "to the people: and he shall be to thee instead of a "mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God:" (that is, you shall direct and authorize him to act in the name of God.) Accordingly, when the people and elders of Israel were assembled, it was Aaron * who "spake all the words which the Lord had "spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the "sight of the people." And in every subsequent conference with Pharaoh, and the whole deliverance from Egypt, Aaron is the inseparable companion of Moses, and always acts the same subordinate, indeed, but yet necessary and important part. Now Josephus † softens all this into a modest apology on the part of Moses, stating his natural incompetency: "Lord, I am still in doubt, how I, a private "man, and of no abilities, should persuade my "countrymen or Pharaoh:" even this is represented as antecedent to the miracles which Moses saw, and

* Exod. iv. 30. † Joseph. Antiq. Book II. ch. xii. § 2.

and was enabled to perform; and not one word is said of God's anger being kindled against him, or of Aaron's being deputed to assist him; nor in the whole history is any notice taken of the important part which Aaron bore in every subsequent transaction: it is barely said, that by the command of God he met his brother, but Moses appears the sole ambassador of God to Pharaoh.

Thus again we find, on the refusal of Pharaoh to comply with the first demand of Moses to let the Hebrews go, and on his encreasing their burthens, the Pentateuch represents the people as angrily reproaching Moses and Aaron: "The Lord look "upon you, and judge; for you have made us to be "abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants, "to put a sword into their hands to slay us:" and immediately Moses as impatiently expostulates with God, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil-entreated "this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? "For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, "he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou "delivered thy people at all*." Of all this, we find not one word in Josephus.

Josephus also suppresses the signal crime of the Jews in setting up the golden calf; and, above all, he omits altogether the offence which both Moses and Aaron were guilty of at Meribah, where the Pentateuch relates their being directed to bring water out of the rock: instead of doing this in the name

* Exod. v. from 21 to 23.

name and for the glory of God, they spoke unadvisedly, not manifesting a firm faith, or giving to God the glory of the miracle; for they gathered the congregation together before the rock, and Moses said unto them, "*Hear now, ye rebels; must we "fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses "lifted up his hand, and smote the rock twice: and "the water gushed out abundantly. And the Lord "spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed "me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the Children "of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congre-"gation into the land which I have given them." This offence, so frequently alluded to in the Pentateuch, and the punishment, of which Moses is represented as repeatedly deprecating, entreating to be permitted to enter the promised land, though in vain, is totally omitted by Josephus. While in the original, nothing can be more affecting than the manner in which it is alluded to; it is expressed as if the heart was weighed down by sorrow for the disappointment of its fondest hope; and as if occasions of venting this sorrow were industriously sought, even a remote allusion or reference is enough; yet it concerned only himself: it was not to his credit, but it was that which he felt most deeply, and which he only could feel so truly.

Thus we clearly perceive the difference between the genuine narration of Moses himself, and the cautious compilation of a remote historian. In short,

* Numb. xx. 10—12.

short, we find Josephus doing what it is natural every compiler of a history should do, when describing the character of a legislator whom he looked up to with reverence, and detailing the conduct of his countrymen whom he wished to place in the best light: we find him magnifying the talents and virtues of the one, and palliating or excusing the murmurs and idolatries, the obstinacy and crimes, of the other. Now, what I contend for is this, that if the Pentateuch had been compiled by any historian guided by the mere uncontrolled feelings and partialities of the human mind, we should discover them in his describing the character of the man who is represented as the legislator and head of the nation who were the chosen people of God. I could shew by a minute induction, that nothing of this kind occurs in the Pentateuch, and that multiplied instances of it are found in Josephus, who is yet admitted to be an historian of general veracity and integrity. But I forbear; I trust I have said enough to prove that the Pentateuch is written with such strict impartiality as enables us to rely on the truth of its relation, even in the most minute particulars.

I have but one further remark to make, and that is, that we find, although the subject-matter of Josephus is essentially the same with that of the Pentateuch, yet, in the selection and order of their circumstances they differ, exactly as we should expect the works of a compiler anxious to interest

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and keep up his reader's attention, would, whenever composed, differ from the original narrative of an eye-witness, detailing (as Moses did) every circumstance as it occurred, and totally careless of every thing but minute precision and strict fidelity.

Josephus chooses to separate the Laws from the narrative; he says *, he will "describe the form of "government which was agreeable to the dignity "and virtue of Moses: these settlements, says he, "are all still in writing as Moses left them; and "we shall add nothing by way of ornament, nor "any thing besides what Moses left us; only we "shall so far innovate, as to digest the several "kinds of Laws into a regular system; for they "were left by him in writing as they were accident-"ally scattered in their delivery, and as he, upon "enquiry, learned them from God."

Thus also we find Josephus describes minutely and elaborately the tabernacle and its furniture, and the dress of the priests†; but not like the detail of them in the Pentateuch, which is calculated to instruct the artists how to make them; while that of Josephus is calculated (as undoubtedly any man but Moses himself would have calculated it) to describe the effect of what had been made, their beauty and splendor, their connection and use. Thus also the account which Josephus gives‡ of the rites of purification and sacrifice, is formed to be read with ease,

* Joseph. Antiq. Lib. IV. ch. viii. §4.

† Ib. Lib. III. ch. vi. & vii. ‡ Ib. ch. ix. x. & xi.

free from the repetitions, and from the minute, and though necessary yet sometimes unpleasant, particulars of the original detail.

All these differences, I contend, strongly illustrate and confirm the originality and the truth of the Pentateuch; and tend to prove it was the work of an eye-witness, and even of an eye-witness whose business and anxious care it was to superintend and direct every circumstance of what he has described: such an eye-witness was Moses, and Moses alone. If then he was the author, can we doubt the truth of the narrative? Were not the leading facts too recent, too important, to admit of the least falsification? Is not the detail formed with such artlessness and simplicity, such particularity and minuteness, such candour and impartiality, that we cannot doubt of its truth, even in the most minute particular? This is the conclusion I wished in this Lecture to establish. But there is another mode of argument which seems to establish it still more decisively, which I shall adduce in the next Lecture.

PART I.

LECTURE III.

THE Authenticity and Truth of the four last books of the Pentateuch confirmed, by a comparison of the book of Deuteronomy with those of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers—Statement of the general argument deduced from this comparison—How far similar, how far dissimilar to that used by Archdeacon Paley, in his Horæ Paulinæ—Its application to the history, so far as it relates events not miraculous—Instanced in general coincidences between the recapitulation in Deuteronomy, and the direct narration in the preceding books—In particular facts and circumstances—As to rules of purification—Directions for carrying the tabernacle—Disposition of the tribes in camp, &c.—An apparent contradiction—How reconciled—As to the appointment of inferior judges—And of the twelve spies.

PART I.

LECT. III.

DEUTERONOMY i. 1, 3.

" THESE were the words which Moses spake unto all Israel,
" on this side Jordan in the wilderness: In the fortieth
" year, in the eleventh month, Moses spake unto the
" Children of Israel according unto all that the Lord had
" given him in commandment unto them."

THIS exordium to the book of Deuteronomy is exceedingly remarkable: it states that it is not, like the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, a direct narration or journal of the various events which occurred to the Jewish legislator and nation, from the commencement of their deliverance from Egypt; but that it was a recapitulation of every thing which Moses thought it necessary to notice, in addressing the people shortly before his death, at the close of the forty years during which he had acted as their lawgiver and judge. I beg leave to direct my reader's attention to this peculiar character of the last book of the Pentateuch, because it seems to me to supply the groundwork of an argument for the genuineness and truth of the

entire, somewhat different from those which I have seen generally and distinctly noticed.

In my two last Lectures, I endeavoured to collect the topics in proof of the authenticity and truth of the works ascribed to Moses; from their general reception among the Jews; from the important and public nature of the facts they relate; from the simplicity of their style and structure; from the particularity of their narrative, natural to an eye-witness, and to an eye-witness alone; and especially from the admirable impartiality they every where display. But if the distinct nature and purpose ascribed to the book of Deuteronomy really belongs to it, a comparison of this with the preceding books of the Pentateuch ought to afford a distinct proof of the truth and authenticity of all, from the UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES between them.

Arguments of somewhat a similar kind have been lately applied by Archdeacon Paley *, with a force which seems unanswerable, to confirm the authenticity and truth of the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of St. Paul, by comparing them together, and pointing out the undesigned coincidence between the direct narration in the Acts, and the indirect allusions to the same facts in the Epistles; and thus establishing the truth of both, on the same principle as that by which we yield entire credit to two unsuspected witnesses, who deliver accounts of the same transactions, if it appears that neither

* Vide Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.

neither were acquainted with the testimony of the other, and yet that their evidence exactly agrees.

An argument of precisely the same nature as this cannot be applied to confirm the truth of the Pentateuch, because we have not any cotemporary writings to compare with it; all the works of the Old Testament (the book of Job perhaps excepted) being plainly subsequent to it, all presupposing its truth, deriving from it almost every account of the facts which it details; and in almost every allusion to these facts, adapted to the narrative which the Pentateuch delivers. This circumstance proves undoubtedly that the history of the Pentateuch was received by all subsequent Jewish writers, as the only authentic account of their nation; and thus establishes its truth exactly in proportion as it is improbable the whole Hebrew people should be mistaken in receiving such a narrative as true, if it were really fictitious; an improbability which can scarcely be stated too high, if we consider the public nature and great importance of the facts which the Pentateuch details, the high authority of the person to whom it is ascribed, and the early period at which it was received. But having touched upon these topics, I now dismiss them, and proceed to enquire whether we may not even from the internal structure of the Pentateuch, derive some arguments for its genuineness and truth; which, though not exactly the same with those of the distinguished writer to whom I have alluded, are yet somewhat of

a similar nature. We cannot indeed compare the entire with cotemporary writers, and thus confirm it by the agreement of different and independent testimonies; but we can compare the different parts of it together, and weigh the coincidence between the different parts of the same testimony. We may examine whether there exists a natural and exact agreement between the direct narrative and the various references to the same facts in the recapitulation, as well with each other as with the different situations in which the supposed author is related to have been placed, and the various views and feelings which these situations would naturally suggest.

The direct narrative was written at the time of the transactions, as they were passing; the recapitulation was delivered at a period long subsequent to many. The former was intended to record all the particulars of the events, most necessary to be known; in the latter it was intended to notice only such particulars as the immediate object of the speaker, in addressing the people, rendered it expedient to impress upon their minds. In each, the laws are intermixed with the facts, and both laws and facts are referred to for different purposes and on different occasions. This gives room for comparing these statements and allusions, and judging whether they agree in such a manner as appears to result, not from the artifice which forgery or falsehood might adopt, but from the

consistency of nature and truth. We may thus weigh the different testimonies of the same witness, delivered at different times and on different occasions, and judge, as it were by a cross examination, of their truth. And we may remark, that if a coincidence appears in minute and unimportant circumstances, it is therefore the more improbable it should have been designed; also, the more indirect and circuitous it is, the less obvious it would have been to a forger or compiler. If the situations in which the writer is placed, and the views with which at different times he alludes to the same facts, are different, and the terms which he employs are adapted to this difference, in an artless and natural manner, this is a strong presumption of truth. Finally, if the direct narrative and the subsequent references and allusions appear in any instance to approach to a contradiction, and yet on closer inspection are found to agree, this very strongly confirms the absence of art, and the influence of truth and reality.

Having thus expounded the general meaning of my argument, I proceed to exemplify it by some instances, which seem sufficient for establishing the conclusion contended for.

Some presumption that the four last books of the Pentateuch were really composed by an eye-witness at the time of the transactions, arises from their describing the nation and the Lawgiver in circumstances totally different from any which ever

existed

existed before or after that peculiar period; from their adapting every incident, however unimportant, every turn of expression, however minute, to these peculiar circumstances.

The Jews are supposed to have left the land of Egypt, and not yet possessed themselves of the land of Canaan: in this interval the nation was all collected together, never before or after; it then dwelt in tents, never before or after; no one possessed any landed property or houses; no local distinctions, no local tribunal, could then exist: these, and a variety of other circumstances of the same nature, necessarily attended this peculiar situation. Now such is the nature of the human mind, that though it may be easy to imagine a peculiar situation of fictitious characters, and describe their conduct in this situation with sufficient consistency, as in a poem or a fiction entirely unconnected with reality; yet, when characters that have really existed are described in circumstances entirely or even partly fictitious; when it is necessary to combine a considerable degree of truth with a certain portion of fiction; when it is necessary to describe this unprecedented and fictitious situation, not merely in general terms, but in a very minute detail of facts and regulations; to connect it with particular times and places and persons, to combine it with subsequent events which were real, and with the laws and customs which the writer himself lives under, and which prevail through an

extensive nation; then, indeed, it requires no ordinary ingenuity, and no common caution, to preserve a perfect consistency; never once to suffer the constant and familiar associations which perpetually obtrude themselves upon the mind from present experience, to creep into our language or sentiments, when we wish to describe or relate facts suitably only to past experience. Nay, admit that all this may possibly be done, it certainly can be done only by great care and art; and it is, I should conceive, next to impossible but that this care and art should somewhere or other betray itself in the turn of the narrative or the expression.

Now an attentive perusal of the Pentateuch will, I doubt not, prove that it is written without any the least appearance of art or caution; and it is certain beyond all doubt, that its facts, sentiments and language, are adapted to the peculiarities of the situation which have been noticed. The present tense is constantly used in speaking of the facts in the wilderness: "I am the Lord, who bringeth "you up, out of the land of Egypt:" the future, in speaking of any thing to be done in the land of Canaan*: "I drive out before you the Amorite "and the Canaanite: take heed to thyself, lest "thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the "land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in "the midst of thee. But ye shall destroy their "altars. Three times a year shall all your male "children

* Exod. xxxiv. 11—13, & 23, 24.

" children appear before me. For I will cast out " the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders."

Thus also it is perpetually supposed in every direction as to public matters, that the whole congregation can be collected together at the shortest warning. We are told * of dead bodies " carried " out of the camp;" of victims on particular occasions being burned without the camp †: this peculiarity of situation mixes itself with every circumstance of the narrative, directly and indirectly, in express terms, and by incidental allusions, and always without any appearance of art or design.

But to proceed to compare the direct narrative with the recapitulation. We may observe, that a variety of circumstances which it was natural and necessary to notice on the entrance of the Jews into the land of their inheritance, occur for the *first* time in the last address which Moses delivered to the people on the borders of Canaan; then, and not before, does the legislator speak of the " place " which the Lord should choose to put his name " therein ‡." Then, and not before, does he add to the precepts concerning the observance of the three great feasts, that they were to be celebrated at that holy place: then, and not before, does he enjoin the Jews to bring their offerings, their sacrifices, their tithes, and the firstlings of their flocks and of their

* Vide Levit. nine first chapters, also x. 5.

† Levit. iv. 21. & viii. 17. Numb. xix. 9.

‡ Deut. xii. 5.

their herds, to the same holy place, and not to eat them in the gates of their own cities; and if that house of the Lord should be too far from them *, to turn their offerings into money, and employ that for the celebration of the religious festivals, at the place which the Lord should choose. Now also does the legislator add to the rules relating to the Levites, that which gave them a right of † migrating from any other city, and joining with those who were employed in the service of God, at the place which he should choose.

Thus also in recapitulating the regulations of the civil Law, the legislator now, for the first time, introduces the ‡ appointment of judges and officers in the different cities which they should inhabit; and fixes the right of appealing, in difficult cases, from these judges to the High Priest and his assessors at the place which the Lord should choose; and determines what the elders of each city may finally decide on, and the manner in which they should examine the cause, as in the instances of an uncertain murder §, of the rebellious son, and in the ceremony of taking or refusing the widow of a brother who had died childless. The city, the gate of the city, the elders of the city, are now perpetually introduced, never before.

We may also observe, that in this last address, when the people were going to attack the great body

* Deut. xiv. 24. † Ibid. xviii. 6.
‡ Deut. xvi. 18. xix. 11. xxi. 18. § Ibid. xxi.

body of their enemies, and, as they conquered them, were to inhabit their land; different circumstances are mentioned, suited to this new situation. The causes which were to excuse men's going to war are now first stated, "Having built a new house, "planted a new vineyard, or betrothed himself to a "wife*;" all of which supposed a separation of the people from the common camp of the whole congregation, in consequence of their possessing the promised land. Now also the rules about † besieging cities, about not destroying such trees around them as were good for food, are specified much more minutely than before, because now sieges would be frequent. Now also Moses enlarges more frequently and more fully than he ever did before, on the fertility and excellence of the promised land‡: this was natural; such a topic at an earlier period would have encreased the murmurings and the impatience of the people at being detained in the wilderness; whereas, now it encouraged them to encounter with more cheerfulness the opposition they must meet with from the inhabitants of Canaan.

These general and obvious features of difference, which distinguish the last book of Moses from the preceding ones, when compared with the evident artlessness and simplicity of the narrative, seem to result from truth and reality alone. Such differences were natural, nay unavoidable, if these books were

* Deut. xx. 5. &c. † Ibid. xx. 10, 19.
‡ Deut. v. 3, & 19. viii. 7. xi. 10. xv. 4.

were really composed by Moses, who was the witness of the facts, and the author of the Laws which these books contain; they would be much less likely to occur, if any other man were the author, even if he were an eye-witness; and they are totally unlike the general detail of a remote compiler, or the laboured artifice of fiction and forgery.

This general suitableness of manner in the different books of the Jewish Lawgiver, to the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, seems to supply a proof of authenticity at once natural and convincing. But there are coincidences of a less obvious nature, more circuitous and indirect, which occur in the statement of particular facts, and deserve to be accurately attended to, as supplying still more decisive characters of truth and authenticity.

In delivering rules about the *leprosy*, it is said, "When ye be come into the land of *Canaan*, which "I give to you for a possession, and I put the "plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your "possession," ye shall do thus, and thus *. I notice this instance, because that a house is spoken of, not at all with a design to mark the circumstance of their not yet being come into the land of their possession, but is of necessity introduced from the nature of the case. The subject here is the discovery and the purification of leprosy. As to this, particular directions are given with respect to a *house*, but nothing is said of a *tent*; whereas, with regard

* Leviticus, xiv. 34.

regard to the impurity contracted by the presence of a dead body *, all the directions relate to a *tent*, and nothing is said of a *house*. Now this difference is, by a little attention, easily accounted for; the writer applies the rules about the purification from a dead body to the object then most familiar with him, a tent. And as its lying in a house would produce no effect different from its lying in a tent, and require no difference of purification, he says nothing about a house; but leaves the nature of the thing to suggest the regulation when it should become necessary. Whereas, in detailing the rules for discovering and purifying the leprosy, all the materials of which tents are made †, wool, and canvas, and leather, are particularized, as exhibiting each of them peculiar symptoms of the plague ‡; and this being done, it was unnecessary to say any thing of a tent itself; but as the materials of a house were quite different, and the appearances of infection in it peculiar, this required a particular specification. All this has the appearance of reality, and is exactly the way in which an eye-witness would have spoken; but it is such a difference as a writer of fiction would scarcely have thought of.

A similar observation may be made, on the manner in which the service of the Levites in taking care of the tabernacle is described §. We find the families

* Numbers, xix. 14.; also compare 11 & 21. which prove the rules as to a dead body, were of permanent obligation.

† Lev. xiii. 47 to 58. ‡ Ibid. 48. 59.

§ Numbers, iii. & iv.

families of the Levites enumerated, the numbers of each, and the heads of them, and which were to be entrusted with the most holy things. If it should be conceived that all this may have been inserted in a fictitious narrative, like the catalogues of Homer and Virgil, to preserve the semblance of probability, and to compliment existing families by representing their supposed ancestors in situations of peculiar dignity; yet how can we on such a principle account for the exact detail which is given, not only of the arrangement of these families round the tabernacle, but the particular parts* of that structure, and the particular sacred vessels which each family was to carry on the march; and still more, the minuter directions given as to the mode of taking these different parts asunder, protecting them from the injuries of the weather during the march, carrying and setting them up? How unnatural and irrational would all this appear in the remote compiler of a general history, who lived long after these marches had ceased, when all such directions were utterly superfluous. Surely we cannot suppose that such particulars as these should proceed from any writer but an eye-witness of the events; nor even from an eye-witness, except he had been engaged as Moses was, in originally directing and constantly superintending these operations.

* Numbers, iii. 25, 26. 31. 35, 36.; also Numbers, iv. particularly 15, 20.

Different circumstances occur in the detail of these directions, which seem to supply more decisive characters of truth and authenticity; because they display coincidences more minute, or more circuitous and indirect. Thus it is mentioned, that Aaron as High Priest, and his family, had charge of the Ark of the Lord, and the furniture of the Holy of Holies; but they were to be carried, during the progress of each march, by an inferior family; and the writer remarks, these were not to approach them, until "Aaron and his sons had made an end "of covering them, at the commencement of the "journey *." What forger or mere compiler would have thought of such a circumstance?

A coincidence still more remarkable on this subject is the following. In the third and fourth chapter of Numbers, the parts of the tabernacle to be carried by each family of the Levites, on the march, are minutely specified. The fifth and sixth are taken up with a detail of Laws entirely unconnected with this subject; the seventh begins with relating, that the different princes of Israel made an offering of six covered waggons and twelve oxen, which Moses employed to carry the tabernacle, and distributed to two families of the Levites, "ac- "cording to their service †;" (for the third were to carry the part assigned to them, the furniture of the Holy of Holies upon their shoulders); to one are assigned

* Numbers, iv. 15. † Ibid. vii. 5, to 9.

assigned two, to another four waggons. The reason of this inequality is not specified; but on turning back, we find that the family to which the four* waggons are assigned, had been appointed to carry the solid, and therefore heavy parts of the tabernacle, its boards, and bars and pillars; while that family to which the two† waggons are assigned, was appointed to carry the lighter, its curtains and coverings, its hangings and cords. Such a coincidence as this is extremely natural, if Moses, who directed this matter, recorded it; but is it not wholly improbable, a forger or compiler should think of detailing such minute particulars at all, or if he did, should detail them in such a manner as this? The more minute and apparently unimportant such coincidences as this are, the more unlikely is it they should arise from any thing but reality.

Another coincidence of somewhat a similar nature is the following. In the second chapter of the book of Numbers, the writer describes the division of the twelve tribes into four camps, the number of each tribe, and the total number in each camp. He fixes the position each was to take round the tabernacle, and the order of their march: and he directs that the tabernacle, with the camp of the Levites, should set forward between the second and third camps‡. But in the tenth chapter occurs what seems at first a direct

* Compare Numbers, vii. 8. with iv. 31.
† Compare Numbers, vii. 7. with iv. 25.
‡ Numbers, ii. 17.

a direct contradiction to this; for it is said *, that after the first camp had set forward, then "the "tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of "Gershon, and the sons of Merari, set forward, "bearing the tabernacle; and afterwards the second "camp, or standard of the children of Reuben." But this apparent contradiction is reconciled a few verses after, when we find that though the less sacred parts of the tabernacle, the outside tent and its apparatus, set out between the first and second camp; yet the sanctuary, or Holy of Holies, with its furniture, the ark and the altar, did not set out till after the second camp, as the direction required. And the reason of the separation is assigned, that those who bore the outside tabernacle might set it up, and thus prepare for the reception of the sanctuary against it came †. Would a forger or compiler who lived when these marches had wholly ceased, and the Israelites had fixed in the land of their inheritance, have thought of such a circumstance as this?

In comparing the direct narrative with the recapitulation in the last book of the Pentateuch, some differences occur well worth noticing. In the eighteenth chapter of Exodus, Moses, with singular impartiality, gives the credit of originating one of the most salutary and important parts of the Jewish civil government to his father-in-law, Jethro; who, observing the variety and weight of business which oppressed the legislator, from his acting as judge of every

* Numbers, x. 17. † Ibid. x. 21.

every private litigation between the people, tells him, * "The thing that thou doest is not good. "Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and "this people with thee: this thing is too heavy "for thee; thou art not able to perform it thy-"self alone. Hearken now unto my voice: Thou "shalt provide out of all the people able men, "such as fear God, and place such over them, "to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, "rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; and let them "judge the people. If thou shalt do this thing, "and God command thee so, then thou shalt be "able to endure, and all this people shall also go "to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to "the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he "had said. And Moses chose able men out of "all Israel, and made them heads over the people, "rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of "fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the "people at all seasons: the hard causes they "brought unto Moses, but every small matter they "judged themselves." Such is the direct narrative. In the very beginning of his address to the people, Moses is represented as alluding to this fact, but with this remarkable difference; that he not only says nothing of Jethro, but that, instead of representing himself as the person who selected these magistrates, he states that he had appealed to the people,

* Exod. xviii. 17, &c.

people, and desired they should elect them. "I "spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able "to bear you myself alone: The Lord your God "hath multiplied you, and behold, ye are this day "as the stars of heaven for multitude. (The Lord "God of your fathers make you a thousand times "so many more as ye are, and bless you as he hath "promised you.) How can I myself bear your "cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? "Take you wise men, and understanding, and "known among your tribes, and I will make them "rulers over you. So I took the chief of your "tribes, wise men, and known, and made them "heads over you. And I charged your judges at "that time, saying, Hear the causes between your "brethren, and judge righteously between every "man and his brother, and the stranger that is "with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judg-"ment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the "great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man, "for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is "too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will "hear it*." There is a great and striking difference between these statements, but there is no contradiction: Jethro suggested to Moses the appointment; he, probably after consulting God, as Jethro intimates, "if God shall thus command thee," referred the matter to the people, and assigned the choice of the individuals to them; the persons thus selected

* Deut. i. 9, to the end.

selected he admitted to share his authority as subordinate judges. Thus the two statements are perfectly consistent. But this is not all; their difference is most natural. In first recording the event, it was natural Moses should dwell on the first cause which led to it, and pass by the appeal to the people as a subordinate and less material part of the transaction; but in addressing the people, it was natural to notice the part they themselves had in the selection of those judges, in order to conciliate their regard and obedience. How naturally also does the pious legislator in his public address, dwell on every circumstance which could improve his hearers in piety and virtue. The multitude of the people was the cause of the appointment of these judges: How beautifully is this increase of the nation turned to an argument of gratitude to God! How affectionate is the blessing with which the pious speaker interrupts the narrative, imploring God, that the multitude of his people may increase a thousand fold! How admirably does he take occasion, from mentioning the judges, to inculcate the eternal principles of justice and piety, which should control their decisions! How remote is all this from art, forgery, and imposture. Surely here, if any where, we can trace the dictates of nature, truth and piety.

A similar difference occurs between the direct narrative of the appointment of those who were sent

to spy out the land of Canaan,' and the manner in which Moses recapitulates this fact, when he addresses the people*. In the former it is stated, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou "men, that they may search the land of Canaan, "which I give unto the Children of Israel: of "every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, "every one a ruler among them. And Moses, by "the commandment of the Lord, sent them from "the wilderness of Paran." The history then reckons up their names, and recounts the evil report which they brought up of the land which they had searched; the fatal effect it produced in exciting the congregation of Israel to rebel against their God; the consequent wrath of God, who threatened to cut off the whole nation by the pestilence, and to raise up of Moses a people greater and mightier than they. It relates at full length, the intercession of Moses to avert this dreadful doom, and its being changed into a sentence of condemnation against the adults of that generation, from twenty years old and upwards, that they should never enter into that good land, but should be detained in the wilderness for forty years, and there die. This relation takes up two long chapters: the recapitulation of this event, addressed to the Children of that generation at the interval of forty years, is contained in half a chapter; yet it exhibits a view of the transactions materially different from the original narrative, yet reconcileable

* Numb. xiii. xiv.

reconcilcable with that narrative, and of such a nature, that (as it seems to me) every variation may be accounted for, from the peculiar views and feelings of the Jewish legislator in this address to the people.

The recapitulation* begins with relating what took place when the people came to Kadesh Barnea, before any idea of sending spies had occurred: "Then," says Moses, "I said unto you, Ye are "come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which "the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, "the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: "go up, and possess it, as the Lord God of thy "fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be "discouraged. And ye came near unto me, every "one of you, and said, We will send men before "us, and they shall search us out the land, and "bring us word again by what way we must go, "and into what cities we shall come. And the "saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men "of you, one of a tribe, and they turned and came "unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out." Here then the legislator reminds the people of two circumstances omitted in the original narrative: one, that when they had first approached the promised land, he had commanded them to go up at once and possess the land, fearing nothing, for God was with them: the other, that the idea of delaying to do this, and sending spies to search out the land, had

* Deut. i. from ver. 19, to the end.

had originated, not with the legislator, but with the people; and that it was in compliance with their own request, that God had commanded Moses to appoint the spies.

This variation is extremely natural: it is not to be wondered at, that Moses should omit these circumstances in the original narrative, where he was more intent upon the final event itself, than the subordinate causes that led to it; but it was highly expedient, when addressing the people, that he should recal these circumstances to their memory, as they so strongly proved that the prime origin of this destructive event was found in their disobedience to the command of their legislator, and that they were themselves the authors of a scheme which terminated so fatally. As naturally can we account for Moses, in his recapitulation of his own conduct on this occasion, omitting altogether the menace of God, to disinherit the Jews, and raise up a nation from himself in their stead; and for his taking no notice of his own successful intercession, on which God had deigned to wave the execution of this awful menace. To dwell on a fact so disgraceful to the people whom he addressed, and so honourable to himself, would have served rather to wound the feelings and kindle the jealousy of his hearers, than to awaken them to piety and repentance, and would not have suited the character of him "who was the "meekest of men*;" though, in recording the dispensations

* Vide Numbers, xii. 3.

dispensations of Providence for the cool reflection of his countrymen, it was a lesson too important to be left out. And that this was the real cause of the omission here, we may be satisfied, from the singular circumstance of Moses sliding into this part of his address to the people, a fact which took place at a quite different time, but which tended to conciliate his hearers by humbling himself in their eyes, and reminding them that he as well as their fathers had offended God; so that like them he was condemned never to enter into the promised land. For when he states, that God swore, saying, "Surely, there shall "not one of these men of this evil generation see "that good land, which I sware to give unto your "fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, because "he hath wholly followed the Lord;" he adds, "Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, "saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither; but "Joshua the son of Nun, who standeth before thee, "shall go in thither; encourage him, for he shall "cause Israel to inherit it *."

The introduction of this his own rejection, and the substitution of Joshua as the person destined by God to lead the Jews to conquer the promised land, was here peculiarly natural and useful; lest the people recollecting their former defeat, in attempting to invade that land when Moses did not accompany them, should dread a similar defeat now, when they were to be entirely deprived of him. But this awful menace

* Deut. i. 34—38.

menace of God to destroy the Jews, and raise from Moses a nation mightier than they, is introduced on another occasion, when its introduction was indispensably necessary; when he warns that people, "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord "thy God hath cast out this nation before thee, "saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath "brought me in to possess this land. Not for thy "righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine "heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for "the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God "doth drive them out from before thee, and that he "may perform the word which the Lord sware unto "thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Under-"stand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth "thee not this good land to possess it, for thy "righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people. "Remember, and forget not how thou provokedst "the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: "from the day that thou didst depart out of Egypt, "until ye came unto this place, ye have been re-"bellious against the Lord*." To inculcate deeply this humiliating, but necessary truth, nothing was more conducive than to state to them, that the greatness of their rebellion had almost induced that God in whom they trusted, totally to disinherit and destroy them, and raise up another nation in their place; and therefore this circumstance is here noticed †.

It

* Deut. ix. 4—7. † Ver. 14.

It is observable, that on two occasions, the whole nation had united in rebelling against God, and determining to return into Egypt: the first, when they caused Aaron to set up the golden calf; the second, after the return of the spies from the promised land. And the direct narrative informs us, that on both occasions the divine menace against the Jews was accompanied with the same offer to Moses, to raise up from him a mightier nation in their place. In reminding the people of their guilt on both these occasions, Moses mentions the great wrath of God against the Jews; but on one of them only does he notice the divine * offer so honourable to himself, while he repeatedly alludes to his offence against God, and his consequent exclusion from the promised land.

Is not all this well worth our attention? In every circumstance which the legislator adds to his original narrative, or omits from it, do we not discern the feelings of nature, and the coincidence of truth?

I might add different similar instances of such natural and undesigned coincidence; but I trust I have adduced enough to confirm my position, so far as relates to the general history of common events.

It

* In Deut. ix. compare 14 & 25 with each other; and also Exod. xxxii. 10. and Numb. xiv. 12.

It shall be the object of my next Lecture to evince, that similar characters pervade the accounts of the miracles which the Pentateuch contains, and connect them with the common events in one uniform and consistent narrative.

PART I.

LECTURE IV.

THE argument stated in the preceding Lecture, applied to the narrative of miraculous events in the four last books of the Pentateuch, in order to shew that they are related with the same marks of truth as the common events—Instanced in the manner of referring to the delivery of the Law in Horeb—And to the punishment inflicted for the worship of Baal Peor—And to the delivery of the Decalogue—In the general manner of allusions to different miracles—In the account of various miracles wrought to punish opposition to the authority of Moses—Apparent contradiction as to the different statements of circumstances attending the punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—Its explanation—Inference from thence.

PART I.

LECT. IV.

DEUTERONOMY xi. 2 & 7.

" Know ye this day, for I speak not with your children,
" which have not known and which have not seen the
" chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his
" mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm. But your eyes
" have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did."

THUS directly does the book of Deuteronomy purport to be the language of an eye-witness to all the miracles recorded in the preceding history of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, addressing a nation who were also themselves eye-witnesses to the same great acts. It is on this ground and this ground only, the legislator claims obedience to his Laws as evidently of a divine authority. If then this character really belongs to the book of Deuteronomy; if the miracles alluded to, were really performed in the sight of Moses, who thus addresses the nation, and in the sight of the entire nation which he addresses; we shall certainly be able to find in the internal structure of this address, and in the nature of the allusions it contains,

contains, some proofs of this. We shall be able to perceive in the history of the miraculous events and the allusions to them, the same exact suitableness of the sentiment and language of Moses to the situations in which he is placed; and the same natural and undesigned coincidence between the address to the people in Deuteronomy, and the direct narrative of the preceding books, which we have before noticed in the history of the common events, and the allusions to them. We shall perceive, that the miracles and common events cannot be separated from each other, that they are all woven into one uniform natural and consistent narrative; that they are all mentioned with the same artlessness, the same precision and particularity, the same evident consciousness of truth.

I shall now state a few instances where the undesigned coincidence, the exact suitableness which we have been noticing in the recital of the natural events of the history, are also observable in the relation of the miraculous facts and the allusions to them.

We may remark then, that in the direct narrative, the miracles are related minutely and circumstantially; the time, the place, the occasion of each being wrought, are exactly specified; and such circumstances are introduced, as, when considered, prove the miraculous nature of the fact, though no argument of that kind is instituted. The miracles also are related in the exact order of time when

they happened, and the common and supernatural events are exhibited in one continued and indeed inseparable series.

Now, had the recapitulation of events been formed, for the purpose of gaining credit to a doubtful narrative of supernatural facts, we should (I presume) perceive a constant effort to dwell upon and magnify the miracles, to obviate any objections to their reality; we should find the writer accusing his countrymen of obstinate incredulity, asserting his own veracity, and appealing in proof of the facts to that veracity. But it is most evident that nothing of this appears in the book of Deuteronomy. The people are never once reproached with having doubted or disbelieved the miracles, but constantly appealed to as having seen and acknowledged them; though notwithstanding this, they did not preserve that confidence and that obedience to God, which such wonderful interpositions ought to have secured. The speaker never produces arguments to prove the miracles, but always considers them as notoriously true and unquestioned, and adduces them as decisive motives to enforce obedience to his Laws. This is the only purpose for which they are introduced; and such circumstances in the history as, though not miraculous, would shew the necessity of obedience, are dwelt on as particularly as the miracles themselves.

Thus the object of the three first chapters of Deuteronomy, is to assure the people of the divine

assistance in the conquest of Canaan, and to convince them of the guilt of not confiding in that assistance. For this purpose the speaker alludes to the former disobedience of the people, when forty years before they had arrived at the borders of Canaan; and mentions the miracles they had previously to that time witnessed, in general terms, merely as aggravations of their guilt. "I said unto "you, dread not, neither be afraid of them. The "Lord your God, which goeth before you, he shall "fight for you, according to all that he did in "Egypt before your eyes: And in the wilderness, "where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God "bare thee as a man doth bear his son in all the "way that ye went, until ye came to this place. "Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your "God, who went in the way before you to search "you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by "night to shew you by what way ye should go, "and in a cloud by day*." He then states the denunciation of God, that all the men of that generation should be cut off, and that their little ones, whom they said should be a prey, should go in to possess the promised land. He mentions the defeat of the Jews by the Amorites, when they went up presumptuously; and shews the deep impression these events made upon the minds of their fathers; by their waiting for the divine permission before they changed their march, by their not

* Deut. i. 29—33.

not attempting the territory of the Edomites, the Moabites, or the Amorites, because God had assigned these lands as their possessions. And he here mentions a fact *never before noticed*, but well fitted to increase the confidence of the Jews in the divine protection; even that the nations who had inhabited these countries before the children of Esau and of Lot, had been "great and many and tall," but that the Lord "had destroyed them before these nations *." He then notices the success of the Jewish arms against the kings of the Amorites and of Bashan, whom they attacked with the divine permission; and concludes with assuring them, that Joshua was appointed by God to cause them to possess the land of their inheritance. Is not this whole exhortation natural? Is not the brief incidental introduction of the miracles, and their being blended with other facts not miraculous, but tending to impress the same conclusion, natural? Does not the whole appear totally unlike the timidity and artifice of fiction or imposture?

It might be proved by a minute induction of every instance in which the miracles are referred to in Deuteronomy, that the allusion is naturally suggested by the nature of the topic which the legislator wishes to enforce; and that it is addressed to the people in that manner, which would be clear and forcible if they had been spectators of the miracle alluded to, and on no other supposition. Thus the whole

* Deut. ii. 10, &c.

whole miracle is never related, but that leading circumstance selected which suited the present subject.

When, in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, he calls on the people to keep and do the statutes and judgments which he taught them, and to teach them to their sons, and their sons' sons; his argument is derived from the solemn manner in which the people had heard them promulgated by the voice of God himself: "Especially," says he, "in the day when ye stood before the Lord your "God in Horeb; when the Lord said unto me, "Gather the people together, and I will make them "hear my words, that they may learn to fear me "all the days that they shall live upon the earth, "and that they may teach their children. And "ye came near and stood under the mountain, "and the mountain burned with fire unto the "midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and "thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you "out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice "of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye "heard a voice." We may ask why, of the many awful circumstances attending this dread appearance, is this of their having seen no similitude thus singled out? The next paragraph explains. "Take "therefore good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw "no manner of similitude on the day when the Lord "spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the "fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a

"graven image." Now here let me ask, Would it have been natural to ground this prohibition against making a graven image, not on the absurdity of it, not on the danger of its leading them to forget God, but simply on this circumstance, of their having seen no similitude when God spake to them in fire from mount Horeb? Would this, I ask, have been natural, if any doubt could have been raised on this particular fact, or if this account had been first published when all the generation who could be supposed to witness this fact had disappeared?

Another circumstance still more remarkable occurs in this exhortation. The Midianites had seduced the Israelites to join in their idolatry to Baal Peor. The original narrative relates the manner in which this took place*; and states, that a plague from the Lord destroyed 24,000 Jews, and that it was stayed by the zeal of Phineas, in putting two of the highest rank amongst the offenders to death. The legislator, in order to deter the Jews from idolatry, alludes to this fact; but he notices no circumstance of it but one, which, though in the original narrative not stated, was infinitely the most important to advert to on this occasion; but which no persons but spectators of the fact, and perfectly acquainted with every individual concerned in it, could possibly feel the truth of. "Your eyes," says he,

* Numb. xxiv.

he *, "have seen what the Lord did because of "Baal Peor; for †all the men that followed Baal "Peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them "from among you. But ye that did cleave unto "the Lord your God, are alive every one of you "this day." It was extremely natural for Moses himself to use this argument; but I confess it seems to me improbable in the extreme, that it should be used when nobody who had been witness of the fact remained alive; or if a compiler had resolved to make this assertion at hazard, and put it in the mouth of Moses, it seems very strange, that it is the only circumstance he should forget to notice in the direct narrative, and the only one he should notice in his reference to it.

I add some few instances of incidental allusions to miracles, to shew how naturally they are introduced, and how exactly the manner in which they are spoken of, suits the situation of Moses himself addressing the eye-witnesses of the fact.

The ten commandments had been the only precepts of the Law, which God had distinctly proclaimed from mount Horeb to the assembled nation of the Jews; the rest of it had been promulgated by Moses himself, as the divine command. Now how does he argue with the people, in order to induce them

* Deut. iv. 3 & 4.

† How decidedly does this statement justify the punishment extending to such a multitude; a circumstance so often objected to.

them to receive what he announced as the divine will, equally with that which God himself had directly proclaimed? He might have urged, that the miracles which God had wrought by him, established his divine authority; that the ten commandments, being of pre-eminent importance, God had himself proclaimed them to impress them the more deeply, and chosen to employ him as the medium of conveying the rest of the Law. He might have urged the severe punishments which God had inflicted on those who had contested against his divine mission (as he does in another * passage,) and rested the point on these arguments; but he chooses a quite different ground. He states, that the people had *declined hearing the rest of the Law directly from God himself*, and had entreated that it should be conveyed to them through him. He recites the ten commandments, and adds, † "These words the Lord spake "unto all your assembly in the mount, out of the "midst of the fire, and he added no more; and he "wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered "them unto me. And ye came near unto me, even "all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; and "ye said, This great fire will consume us: if we "hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, "then we shall die. Go thou near, and hear all "that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou "unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto "thee, and we will hear it, and do it." Such is the ground

* Deut. xi. 6. † Ibid. v. 22, &c.

ground on which Moses claims the obedience of the people to the statutes and judgments which he asserts the Lord commanded him to teach them. Now if this argument had never been used by the legislator, if the fact had never occurred, if the Pentateuch had been the invention of fancy, or even the compilation of some historian long subsequent to the events, what could lead him to clog his narrative with such a circumstance as this? In short, what but truth and reality could suggest such an argument, or gain it the slightest credit from the people to whom it was addressed?

Sometimes the allusions to the miracles are so brief, that their application to the topic which it is meant to enforce cannot be made without an intimate knowledge of the facts. Exhorting the people to love and obey God, it is said, "If ye hearken to "these judgments, the Lord will take away from "thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil "diseases of Egypt (which thou knowest) upon "thee *:" commanding the people, that in the plague of leprosy they should do according to all that the Priests and the Levites should teach them. To confirm this injunction it is added, "Remember "what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam by the "way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt †." Threatening the people with punishment, if they should "at all forget the Lord their God, and walk "after

* Deut. vii. 12 & 15.; and Exod. xv. 26.
† Compare Numbers, xii. with Deut. xiv. 9.

" after other gods," it is said, if ye do so, " I tes-
" tify against you this day, that ye shall surely
" perish. As the nations which the Lord destroy-
" eth before your face, so shall ye perish *." Commanding the Jews to take care lest in their prosperity they forget their God, it is added, " God, who
" brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, the
" house of bondage, and led thee through that great
" and terrible wilderness, where were fiery serpents,
" and scorpions, and drought, where there was no
" water; who brought thee forth water out of the
" rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with
" manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might
" humble thee. Thou shalt remember the Lord thy
" God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get
" wealth †." And again, " Love the Lord, and
" keep his charge; for I speak not with your chil-
" dren which have not known, and which have not
" seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his
" greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out
" arm, and his miracles, and his acts, which he did
" in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the king of
" Egypt, and all his land; and what he did unto
" the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their
" chariots, how he made the water of the Red Sea
" to overflow them, as they pursued after you, and
" how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day;
" and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until
" ye came unto this place; and what he did unto
" Dathan

* Deut. viii. 19, 20. † Ibid. viii. 14—18.

" Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, the son " of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth and " swallowed them up, and their households, and " their tents, and all the substance that was in their " possession in the midst of all Israel. But your " eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, " which he did. Therefore shall ye keep all the " commandments which I command you this day*." Is not this brief allusion to all the miracles which God had wrought, this more full statement of two, calculated, the one to inspire gratitude, and both to strike terror? Is not resting the credit of the facts on the persons addressed, being themselves spectators of these facts, and not merely the children of those who had been spectators; is not all this natural in Moses addressing his cotemporaries? Would it not be most unnatural in any body else, addressing the Jews at any subsequent period?

In the promises of divine assistance which Moses announces to the people, I meet with one circumstance of a very singular nature. When he encourages the people not to be afraid of the nations of Canaan, as mightier than themselves, and declares God shall deliver them unto thee, and destroy them with a mighty destruction until they be destroyed, he interposes this limitation: " I will not drive them " out from before thee in one year, lest the land be- " come desolate, and the beast of the field multiply " against thee; by little and little I will drive them " out

* Deut. xi. 1 to 8.

" out from before thee, until thou be increased and " inherit the land *." Here is a remarkable instance of miraculous interference being extended no further than was absolutely necessary, and combined with a regard to the general analogy of nature and the regular course of Providence. Would the author of a fictitious narrative, the compiler of fugitive and uncertain traditions, have thought of such a limitation, when his whole object must have been to exalt the divine power, whose interference he described as immediate and resistless?

In the account of the return of Moses from Mount Sinai, after having received the tables of the ten commandments, a second time, a remarkable fact is related. " When he came down from the mount, " Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone. " And when Aaron and all the Children of Israel " saw it, they were afraid to come nigh him. And " Moses called unto them; and till he had done " speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. " But when he went in before the Lord to speak " with him, he took the vail off until he came out †." This divine splendor caught as it were from the near approach to the glory of the divine presence, with which the inspired legislator had just been honoured, was admirably calculated to impress the Jewish people (ever strongly affected by sensible objects) with reverence for the Lawgiver and his Laws. But surely it was such a circumstance as no dealer in fiction,

* Deut. vii. 22. † Exod. xxxiv. 29, &c.

fiction, no compiler of traditions, can be supposed to have thought of. We may further remark, that this circumstance is never again alluded to, either in the direct narrative or the recapitulation in Deuteronomy; though every other fact connected with it is repeatedly noticed. Now supposing the fact true, and Moses the writer of the Pentateuch, this silence is perfectly natural; it suited not the modesty of his character, who was the meekest of men, to dwell on such a circumstance. But if any one else had been the author of the narrative, supposing so singular a fiction to have suggested itself at all, is it likely he would notice it *but once?*

One miracle and only one occurs in the last exhortation of Moses to the assembled nations of the Jews, of which *no mention is made in the direct narrative.* "Thou shalt remember," says he, "all "the way which the Lord thy God led thee these "forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and "to prove thee. He suffered thee to hunger, and "fed thee with manna (which thou knewest not) "that thou mightest know that man doth not live "by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth "out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." He *adds,* "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, "neither did thy foot swell these forty years;" or (as it is expressed in another subsequent passage) "I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your "clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe "is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not

"eaten

"eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong "drink; that ye might know that I am the Lord "your God*." If Moses was really the author of the Pentateuch, he could not have noticed this miracle one day before he is said to have first mentioned it, even on the border of the land of Canaan, when the Jews were just preparing to enter it, and when natural means of procuring food and raiment being afforded them, all supernatural aid in these points was to cease. Their being fed with manna is indeed frequently mentioned; because this was a miracle which, though constantly repeated, was in each particular instance plain and distinct. But the circumstance, of the raiment of the whole nation not waxing old for forty years, was a continued supernatural operation, which at no one period could have had its commencement distinctly marked; and therefore never could be noticed with such clear certainty and full effect, as when it was no longer to continue, and its cessation would arrest the attention of the most careless. Let me ask, what imaginer of fiction, what compiler of vague tales, would have thought of such a miracle at all; or, if he did, would have thought of the propriety of not mentioning it till the very close of his narration? Is not this coincidence of the matter and order of the narrative with that which would be natural if the facts were exactly true, and Moses himself the historian, and unnatural on any other supposition? Is

* Deut. viii. 2—4.; and xxix. 5 & 6.

Is not such coincidence a strong character of genuineness and truth?

Some of the most distinguished miracles were wrought to curb and to punish the opposition of the Jews to the commands or authority of their legislator, which some individuals occasionally raised. It is well worth remarking, that we can in every instance of this opposition discover some circumstance in the rank and situation of the individuals exciting it, which naturally accounts for their admitting more readily than others that spirit of pride and jealousy in which this opposition originated. We find Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Æthiopian woman whom he had married; and they said, "Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? hath "he not spoken also by us*?" Aaron was elder brother to Moses, and when on receiving the divine command to go to Pharaoh, he had complained of his slowness of speech; Aaron was appointed by God to supply this defect, and to be his spokesman to the people. "He spake all the words which the Lord "had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the "sight of the people." Through the whole history Aaron acts a part second only to Moses, and he was invested with the High Priesthood, a sacred dignity permanent and hereditary in his family; while the family of Moses had not been honoured with any hereditary dignity, but remained undistinguished from the rest of the Levitical tribe, subordinate to the

* Compare Numbers, xii. 2. with Exod. xv. 20.

the High Priest. Hence it was not unnatural that Aaron should be ready to avail himself of a circumstance in the conduct of Moses, which seemed to render him unworthy of any superiority over a person so much honoured of God as the High Priest conceived himself to be. But why should Miriam, a woman, join in such a contest? Turn back to the first and only occasion in which the history mentions her, and it seems to me to explain the reason. She was the only sister of Moses and Aaron, and on the signal deliverance of Israel from the host of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, when Moses pronounced his celebrated triumphal hymn in gratitude to God, accompanied by the thousands of Israel, Miriam was the person who headed the women in the triumphal procession. "Miriam the Prophetess, "the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; "and all the women went out after her, with tim-"brels and with dances. And Miriam answered "them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed "gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown "into the sea*."

Miriam, then, here appears to occupy the first rank amongst the women of Israel, and even seems to have joined in this triumphal hymn, actuated by a divine inspiration; which explains that remarkable phrase, uniting her with Aaron, "Hath not God spoken by us?" It is very remarkable, the punishment was confined to her; for God struck her with a sudden

* Exod. xv. 20.

a sudden leprosy, which obliged her to be shut out from the camp, as unclean, seven days, thus effectually humbling her in the sight of all the women of Israel. Is it too great a refinement to suppose, that this opposition may have originated in her jealousy, at the respect* which perhaps the women of Israel paid to the wife of their revered legislator, and that hence she may have been peculiarly prompt to remark and to bring forward the objection, of Moses being married to an Æthiopian woman; thus designing to degrade her rival, even though, in order to do so, she must attack the character of the divine legislator? Does not the whole transaction, which at first seems very singular and unaccountable, when thus explained, assume the appearance of nature and reality?

†We find Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not; and there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. We are to remark that this event took place immediately after Aaron and they had been consecrated to the service of God, and when God had miraculously

* It appears from Exod. xviii. that the wife of the Jewish legislator had not been brought to rejoin him by her father, until after the part Miriam had borne in the triumphal procession above recited. Perhaps on her arrival, Miriam found that respect which she had exclusively enjoyed, transferred to or divided with this stranger; and hence her jealousy.

† Compare Exod. xxiv. 9, with Levit. lx. 24.; also Lev. x. and Numb. iii.

miraculously sent down a fire from heaven which had consumed the sacrifice, and from which the fire that was to be employed in future sacrifices was to be taken. The offence therefore of Nadab and Abihu seems to have been their despising this miracle, and employing, instead of the sacred fire, common elementary fire; as if they countenanced the reverence paid to that element, in opposition to the reverence due only to God. It would seem also, that they had been betrayed into this act of presumption by intemperance at the feast upon the peace-offerings; for immediately after, and apparently in consequence of their fate, Moses delivers the injunctions against the priests drinking wine and strong drink when they approached the sanctuary. Perhaps also, their presumption may have been *increased*, by the *high honour which they alone of Aaron's sons had enjoyed*, when they with Moses and Aaron and seventy of the elders of Israel were called up to Mount Sinai, to behold the glory of the God of Israel. This distinguished honour may have puffed them up with the imagination, that they were not to be controlled by the restraints which the other priests were subject to, but that they might approach the altar without observing the strict regulations of the divine command; a presumption which, if suffered to pass with impunity amongst a people so prone to disobedience as the Jews, and just after the observance of the ritual Law had commenced with a public miracle to attest

its divine original, might have introduced a contempt of the system, and apostasy from God.

But the most bold and open rebellion against the inspired Lawgiver, was that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Now the narrative no where notices the circumstances which led them in particular to unite in this rebellion; but when minutely examined, we discover from it, that they had such pretensions from their rank, as may have encouraged them to resist the authority of Moses and Aaron. Korah was one of the chiefs of the family of Kohath, which it appears was *specially employed to carry the ark, and the Holy of Holies, though not permitted to look into them. They were therefore, amongst the Levites, the *next in sacredness of function* to Aaron and his sons, and may therefore the more readily have formed a scheme to contest with Aaron his exclusive right to the High Priesthood. Dathan, Abiram, and On, were *chiefs* of the *tribe of Reuben*, the *first-born* of the sons of Jacob; and may therefore have conceived themselves better entitled than Moses, to pre-eminence in *temporal* power. If these reasons for the conduct of both parties are natural, the silence of the narrative about them serves only to render it the more probable, that the coincidence arises from truth, not from artifice.

A coincidence of a still more remarkable nature seems to me to occur, in comparing the narrative of

* Numb. iii. 31.

of the signal punishment inflicted on these rebels, with subsequent passages; which I will state in the very manner in which it struck my own mind, that it may more truly appear, whether it be overstrained and fanciful, or natural and just. On reading the direct narrative of this punishment, I conceived that Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and *all their families*, were destroyed. It relates *, that "Korah, Dathan, "and Abiram, took men, and rose up before "Moses, with certain of the Children of Israel. "And they gathered themselves together against "Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the con- "gregation are holy, and the Lord is among them; "wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the "congregation of the Lord?" Here they all seemed equally implicated in one common crime. In relating their punishment, it is said, "The Lord spake "unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, "saying, Get ye up from about the tabernacle of "Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up, "and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and he spake "unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray "you, from the tents of these wicked men, and "touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in "all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle "of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side." Afterwards we are told, that the "ground clave "asunder

* Vide Numbers, the entire chapter xvi.; and compare xxvi. 9, 11.

"asunder that was under them; and the earth "opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and "their houses, and all the men that appertained "unto Korah, and all their goods; they, and all "that appertained to them, went down alive into "the pit, and the earth closed upon them. And "there came out a fire from the Lord, and con- "sumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered "incense." On a cursory perusal of this narrative, I was quite certain that the tents and families of all three had been all equally destroyed. In the book of Numbers, when the names of the different families are reckoned up, on mentioning the names of Dathan and Abiram, it is said, "This is that "Dathan and Abiram, who were famous in the "congregation, who strove against Moses and "against Aaron in the company of Korah, when "they strove against the Lord; and the earth "opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, "together with Korah, when that company died, "what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty "men; and they became a sign *." But I was extremely surprised to find it added: "Notwith- "standing, the children of Korah died not." This seemed a direct contradiction. I returned to the original narrative, and on examination, thought I found that though it did not assert the preservation of the family of Korah, it plainly left room for implying

* Numb. xxvi. 9 & 10.

implying it. Dathan and Abiram shewed their rebellion in resisting the authority of Moses as temporal judge, refusing to come when called on to attend his summons: for "Moses sent to call "Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; which "said, We will not come up*." Korah's rebellion consisted in his laying claim to the High Priesthood; and the direction given for bringing his claim to a test, was, "that he and all his company should "take their censers, and put fire in them, and lay "incense thereon, and stand in the door of the "tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and "Aaron;" and it is said, that "Korah gathered "all the congregation against them, unto the door "of the tabernacle of the congregation." Here then a *separation* took place between these different parties. When indeed the divine command was given, that the congregation should separate themselves from all three, speaking of them all collectively, because involved in one common crime, it is said, "Get ye up from about the tabernacle of Korah, "Dathan and Abiram." Yet in delivering this direction we find the separation continued: for Moses was, at the time he received it, standing at the door of the tabernacle with Korah and his company; and it is said, "Moses rose up, and "went unto Dathan and Abiram," (undoubtedly leaving Korah where he was, at the door of the tabernacle) "and the elders of Israel followed him; "and

* Numb. xvi. 12.

"and he spake unto the congregation, saying, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these "wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you "be consumed in their sins. So they gat up from "the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, "on every side." Here they are united, as the people were to separate themselves from all three, as joined in a common cause. Yet they are again spoken of as still separate; for it is said, "Dathan "and Abiram came out and stood in the door of "their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and "their little children." On this circumstance turns the explanation, which seems to account for the final difference of the event. We here perceive that Dathan and Abiram collected their families round them, as their abettors in this rebellion, and as determined to abide all its consequences with themselves: but this is not said of the family of Korah, and the nature of the case shews the reason: Korah did not remain in his tent, but was at a considerable distance from it; the tabernacle being in the centre of the camp, the tents of the Levites surrounding it on every side, and outside them the tents of the other tribes: he had therefore no opportunity of collecting his children about him; he only had all the *men* of his family who supported his rebellion, along with him at the door of the tabernacle. Now it is not said, nor is it a natural supposition, that the wives and children of Korah and his followers should in their absence assemble

of themselves, and stand at the door of their tents, in the same manner as Dathan and Abiram caused their families to do; hence they escaped from being so openly and contumaciously involved in the guilt of this rebellion, and hence they escaped its punishment. The tents of Dathan and Abiram, who both belonged to the tribe of Reuben, were probably together; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up. The tent of Korah, as belonging to the tribe of the Levites, must have been remote from theirs; it displayed no such open rebellion as those of Dathan and Abiram, it therefore escaped. But Moses and the elders of Israel having quitted the door of the tabernacle, leaving there Korah and his rebellious company; at the same instant that the earth swallowed up the tents and families of Dathan and Abiram, a fire went out from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who offered up incense with Korah at their head. And when in the thirty-second verse it is stated, that the earth swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods, it can only mean Dathan and Abiram, to whose tents only Moses is said to have gone, and against whom only he has denounced this species of punishment. The word, "appertaining to Korah," meaning only that they belonged to his party, and supported his cause; for in the third verse after it is said, that the two hundred and fifty men who offered incense perished by a fire from

from the Lord, amongst whom was Korah and all the men of his family. If indeed it had been said, that Moses went to the tents of Korah, and Dathan, and Abiram, there would have been a contradiction; but he only went to those of Dathan and Abiram, and could have no occasion to go to that of Korah, having just left him and all his company at the door of the tabernacle. Thus the narrative, though it seems to approach to contradiction, yet when examined accurately, it not only escapes it, but enables us to discover how the children of Korah, and they only, came to survive the punishment which involved their parents, and the entire families of Dathan and Abiram. Such a coincidence as this, so latent and indirect, is surely a character of truth: such a narrative could scarcely have proceeded from any but the pen of an eye-witness; and what eye-witness can we suppose to have been its author, but that Moses, to whom the Jewish race have universally ascribed it, and therefore admitted it as the code of their law, the rule of their religion, and the only true record of their history?

PART I.

LECTURE V.

THE common events of the Jewish history incredible if separated from the miraculous, but when combined with them form one natural and consistent narrative—Instanced in the history of Moses before he undertook the deliverance of the Jews—In the difficulties attending that attempt, from the Jews and from the Egyptians—His conduct as leader of the emigration unaccountable if unaided by supernatural power—At the departure from Egypt—At the Red Sea—On the return of the twelve spies from Canaan—In the detention of the Jews in the wilderness forty years.

PART I.

LECT. V.

EXODUS, v. 22, 23.

"AND Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, where-
"fore hast thou so evil-entreated this people? why is it
"that thou hast sent me? For since I came unto Pharaoh
"to speak in thy name, he hath evil-entreated this people;
"neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

THIS was the expostulation of the Jewish legislator with the Deity, in the bitterness of his heart at the severe disappointment he experienced, on his first application to the Egyptian monarch in the name of the God of Israel, for permission to let his people go, that they might serve him.

In the three last Lectures I endeavoured to deduce presumptive proofs of the authenticity and truth of the Jewish history, from the structure of the narrative in which it is presented to us; and to shew, that these proofs apply with equal clearness to the miraculous as to the common facts; both being interwoven in one detail, and related with the same characters of impartiality, artlessness and truth. This conclusion will receive great confirmation, should it be found

found that the common events of the history, if we attempt to separate them from the miraculous, become unnatural, improbable, and even incredible, unconnected and unaccountable; while, if combined with the miracles which attended them, the entire series is connected, natural and consistent.

In order to lead the way to this conclusion, I have directed the attention of my readers to the singular narrative from which this passage is taken; as introductory to an enquiry, Whether it appears probable or improbable that the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, the promulgation of the Jewish Law, and the establishment of the Jewish nation in the land of Canaan, can be rationally and adequately accounted for by unassisted human agency, using merely natural means, and taking advantage of natural occurrences? Or, whether on the contrary, the difficulties attending the accomplishment of these events, and the consequent establishment of the Hebrew polity, were not such as no mere human power could have overcome; and whether it be not indispensably necessary to admit the account which the sacred history delivers of a divine interposition, as the only cause fully adequate to the production of effects so important and certain, yet so extraordinary, as the deliverance of Israel, the legislation of Moses, and the settlement of the Hebrew nation in the land of Canaan? For this purpose, let us consider the objects to which this narrative naturally directs our attention; the character of the Jewish

legislator,

legislator, the resistance he encountered from the Egyptian government, the disposition and circumstances of the Hebrew people, and the impediments which presented themselves to their settlement in the land to which they emigrated. Let us review the narrative of these events, separating the leading facts not miraculous, which form the basis of the history, from the miraculous; and consider whether it be rational to receive the former and reject the latter.

Let us first contemplate the character and conduct of the legislator. Born at that period, when his nation groaned under the most oppressive and malignant despotism which ever crushed a people; rescued by a singular providence from that death to which he was destined by the cruel edict of Pharaoh; adopted by the daughter, and educated in the court, of that monarch; there is reason to believe, with the inspired martyr Saint Stephen, that he was "learned in all the wisdom of the "Egyptians," and that he may have been "mighty "both in words and deeds*;" that is, conversant in learning, skilled in writing, and judicious in conduct; for his own positive declaration prevents us from believing him eloquent. When commanded to act as ambassador from the God of Israel to Pharaoh, he pleads as an apology for his reluctance to undertake the dangerous task, *the want of this* quality so necessary for a popular leader†: And that

* Acts, vii. 22. † Exod. iv. 10.

that he did not possess, or at least that he did not display, any military prowess, appears from his employing Joshua to head the Jewish troops, in the very first battle they had occasion to fight, while he stood on an eminence to secure to them divine aid, by holding up his hands to heaven *. But notwithstanding these defects, it is not improbable that, in the vigour of manhood, and the ardour of his honest indignation at the sufferings of his people, he may have conceived the project of rousing them against their oppressors, and rescuing them from Egypt. His religious principles were shocked with the idolatry and vices of the Egyptian court, as his humanity and patriotism revolted at the cruelty exercised against his wretched countrymen. He trusted that God would assist his praiseworthy intentions, and by him accomplish the promised deliverance. "By faith," says the Apostle †, "Moses, "when he was come to years, refused to be called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to "suffer affliction with the people of God, than to "enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming "the reproach of Christ" (the seed in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and to which he looked as the sure pledge of his nation's deliverance) "as greater riches than the treasures "of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence "of the reward." Thus animated, he seems to have attempted that deliverance he hoped for. "When

* Exod. xvii. 8 to 12. † Heb. xi. 24—26.

"When he was full forty years old," says St. "Stephen*, "it came into his heart to visit his "brethren the Children of Israel. And seeing one "of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and "avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the "Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would "have understood, how that God by his hand "would deliver them: but they understood not." Indeed this attempt, prematurely undertaken and utterly unsuccessful, terminated in such a manner as seems to have banished every such idea totally from his thoughts, and to have rendered any such attempt in future, to all human judgment, desperate and impracticable. For, "the next day he shewed "himself unto two of his countrymen, as they "strove, and would have set them at one again, "saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong "one to another? But he that did his neighbour "wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee "a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, "as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday†?" "And "Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is "known. And when Pharaoh heard this, he sought "to slay him; but he fled from the face of Pharaoh, "and dwelt in the land of Midian‡."

Thus exiled from his nation, his life exposed to the most imminent hazard should he presume to return to Egypt; forsaken by his countrymen, and persecuted

* Acts, vii. 23—25. † Ibid. vii. 26—28.
‡ Exod. ii. 14, 15.

persecuted by their enemies; he appears to have relinquished all hope of effecting their deliverance, and to have abandoned every idea of personal ambition or public enterprize. He marries, two sons are born to him, and he devotes forty years *, the prime and vigour of his days, to the humble and peaceful employments of rural life. His family and his flocks occupy the entire attention of the patriarch and the shepherd.

If we exclude the idea of a divine interposition, we must believe that at the end of forty years, without any outward change of circumstances, merely from a rash and sudden impulse, this exile, so long appearing to have forgotten his people, and to have been by them forgot, resumes at the age of fourscore †, the project which, in the full vigour of manhood, and the yet unabated ardour of youthful confidence, he had been compelled to abandon as desperate. He forsakes his family and his property, revisits his nation, determined again to offer himself for their leader, and to attempt their deliverance. Yet he appears not to have cultivated in the interval a single talent, and not to have formed a single preparation to facilitate his enterprize. Of eloquence he confesses himself destitute; of military skill or prowess he never made any display; he appears to have

* Compare Exod. ii. 11—23. with vii. 7. and Acts vii. 23 & 30.

† Exod. vii. 7.

have formed no party among the Jews, no alliance with any foreign power; he had certainly prepared no force.

But it will be said, he employed an engine more powerful than eloquence or arms with an unenlightened people, who looked upon themselves as the favourites of Heaven, and who long had hoped for their deliverance by a divine interposition. He claimed the character of an ambassador commissioned by the God of their fathers, to free them from the bondage under which they groaned; he supported his claim by some artful deceptions and mysterious juggling, which his former acquaintance with Egyptian magic enabled him to practise; and this was sufficient to gain the faith and command the obedience of a superstitious race, always credulous, and now eager to be convinced of what they wished to be true. Thus we may account for his success.

This might appear plausible, if the only thing wanting was to prevail on his countrymen to quit the land of bondage; but let it be remembered, that the great difficulty lay in the necessity of prevailing on the Egyptians to permit their departure *. Supposing the Hebrew slaves were willing to encounter the difficulties of emigration, and the dangers of

* Vide Exod. xiv. 11. Numb. xi. 5. and Numb. xiv. 3. and xx. 5. which prove clearly how ready the Jews were to return to Egypt on any reverse of fortune, and how much they regretted the plenty and peace they enjoyed there, whenever afterwards at a loss for sustenance, or menaced by war.

of invading a warlike nation (a point by no means certain;) yet who shall prevail on their proud and mercenary lords to suffer themselves to be deprived of their service? Every circumstance which would enable a chief to establish his party with the one, would rouse suspicion, resentment and opposition, in the other. As to forcing their way by arms, and thus vindicating their liberty, this was an attempt so hopeless and desperate, that it appears never to have been thought of. For near three hundred years had the Hebrews submitted to the yoke of servitude, without a single struggle to shake it off; above fourscore years before, the malignity of their tyrants had proposed to destroy the nation, by cutting off all their male children, yet this cruelty had excited no revolt. The operation of this dreadful edict had been some way or other eluded, and it had, in all probability, gradually ceased. But who could hope to rouse such a people, debased and dejected with long continued "bondage, in "mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service "in the field*," against one of the most vigilant and most powerful monarchies then existing in the world; by whose forces they, their wives and their children, might be immediately cut off if they attempted to unite and to resist? At all events, their aged leader made no such attempt; he bore no arms, but that rod by which he professed Jehovah

* Exod. i. 14.

Jehovah would enable him to work miracles; and in the name of that God he applied to the Egyptian monarch, to obtain permission for his people to go and hold a feast in the wilderness.

The haughty tyrant unacquainted with the name, and despising the Majesty of Jehovah, rejected the demand with contempt. And Pharaoh said, "Who "is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let "Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I "let Israel go." And he said, "Wherefore do ye, "Moses and Aaron, let the people from their work? "get ye unto your burdens. And Pharaoh com- "manded the task-masters of the people, and their "officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people "straw to make brick, as heretofore; let them go "and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of "the bricks which they made heretofore, ye shall lay "upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof: "for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let "us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there be "more work laid on them, that they may labour "therein: and let them not regard vain words*."

This severe command was proclaimed, and obedience to it peremptorily required: to execute it was found impracticable. But despotism roused to anger, and rejoicing to oppress, would not admit as an apology the impossibility of executing its will. "The officers of the Children of Israel, whom "Pharaoh's task-masters set over them, were beaten, "and

* Exod. v. 2—9.

"and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled "your works, your daily tasks, as when there was "straw? And the officers came and cried unto "Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus "with thy servants? But he said, Ye are idle; "therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice unto "the Lord. Go therefore now and work, for "there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye "deliver the tale of bricks. And they met Moses "and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came "forth from Pharaoh, and they said unto them, The "Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have "made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of "Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a "sword in their hands to slay us*."

On this distressing accusation, Moses, dejected with disappointment, and overpowered with the unexpected sufferings which he appeared to be instrumental in producing, poured forth his complaint before his God; he returned unto the Lord, and said, "Lord, wherefore has thou so evil-entreated "this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? "For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy "name, he hath done evil to this people; neither "hast thou delivered thy people at all †."

Here then is the first crisis, in which the attempt to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage seems, if we consider human means, utterly desperate. Its author

* Exod. v. 14—21. † Ibid. v. 22, 23.

author is resisted and scorned by the Egyptian monarch: deserted and almost execrated by his countrymen for involving them in new miseries, to which yet they submit without any attempt to shake off the yoke. He stands on one side, without arms, without followers, without resources of any human kind; opposed to a mighty sovereign, surrounded by his wise men and priests, his counsellors, his officers, his armies, invested with despotic power, which he is determined to exercise in opposition to the authority of that God whose ambassador the Jewish legislator declares himself, and in contempt of those menaces which he denounces.

Thus the claim of Moses to a divine mission is rejected and scorned, and he has no resource but those magical deceptions, which he is supposed to derive from his Egyptian education; but what hope of succeeding in these, when surrounded, watched, and opposed by all the masters of this art by whom he himself must have been taught, the wise men and priests and magicians of Egypt, supported by the majesty of their monarch, and the power of their state; while their opponent is without a single associate but his own brother to support or assist him?

A very short period elapses, and what is the event? No human force is exercised, not a single Israelite lifts the sword or bends the bow; but the Egyptian monarch is humbled, his people terrified, they urge the Israelites to hasten their departure.

These

These are now honoured as the masters of their late oppressors: they demand of the Egyptians, (the idea of *borrowing*, which our translation expresses, and which implies the humility of a request, and an obligation to return, is wholly foreign to the original:) "The Israelites" (in obedience to the express injunction of Jehovah) "demand of the "Egyptians silver, and gold, and jewels*," as the remuneration due to their past unrequited labours, conceded by divine justice, and obtained by divine power; as the homage due to their present acknowledged superiority, and the purchase of their immediate departure. The Egyptians grant every thing; the Israelites begin their emigration: "Six hundred "thousand men on foot, besides women and chil- "dren; and a mixed multitude went with them; as "well as flocks and herds, and much cattle†."

But notwithstanding this unparalleled success in his main project, the leader of this great body acknowledges himself to have acted in a mode utterly destitute of the slightest human foresight or prudence; for this multitude are so little prepared for their emigration, that they had not time so much as to leaven the bread which they brought out of Egypt; "Because they were thrust out and could "not tarry, neither had they prepared for them- "selves any victual‡." And as if in the first step to display

* Compare Exod. iii. 22. with xii. 35.

† Exod. xii. 37, 38. ‡ Ib. ver. 39.

display his total neglect of every precaution which a wise leader would adopt, he is afraid of conducting them "by the way of the land of the "Philistines, though that was near, lest they should "see war, and return to Egypt*;" yet he takes no care to guide them in such a course as would enable them to escape from pursuit, or contend to advantage with their pursuers. He leads them into a defile, with mountains on either side, and the sea in front. At this moment the Egyptians recover from the panic under the influence of which they had consented to their departure; and they said, "Why "have we done this, that we have let Israel go from "serving us? And they pursued after them, all the "horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, "and his army†," and soon overtook the fugitives, "for they were entangled by the land, the wilder-"ness had shut them in‡."

Perhaps at this crisis, despair inspired them with courage: No, all is dismay and lamentation; they cried unto the Lord, and said unto Moses, "Because "there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken "us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore "hast thou thus dealt with us, to carry us forth out "of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell "thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may "serve the Egyptians? for it had been better for "us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should "die in the wilderness§."

Here

* Exod. xiii. 17.
† Ibid. xiv. 5 & 9.
‡ Ibid. xiv. 3.
§ Ibid. xiv. 11 & 12.

Here now is a second crisis, in which no human hope or help appears to sustain their leader: on one side, a regular disciplined army, assured of triumph; on the other, a rabble of women and children, and men as spiritless as they, expecting nothing but certain death, lamenting they had left their servitude, and ready to implore their masters to permit them again to be their slaves.

But if their leader had betrayed unparalleled imprudence in exposing his host to such a danger, the high strain of confidence he now speaks in, is equally unparalleled; "Fear ye not," (says he to the terrified multitude:) does he add, rouse your courage; there is no way to avoid slavery or death, but by one manly effort; turn then on your pursuers, and your God will aid you? No; his language is, "Stand ye still, and see the salvation of "the Lord, which he will shew you to-day; for the "Egyptians whom you have seen to-day, you shall "see them again no more for ever; the Lord shall "fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace*." What would this be in any mere human leader, but the ravings of frenzy? yet, wonderful to relate, the event accords with it. The Israelites escape "by "the way of the sea:" the Egyptians perish in the same sea, we know not how or why; except we admit the miraculous interposition which divided the red Sea, "the waters being a wall on the right "and left hand," to let his people pass free; and when

* Exod. xiv. 13 & 14.

when the infatuated Egyptians pursued, overwhelmed with its waves their proud and impious host.

Let us now pass by the intermediate events of a few months, and observe this people on the confines of that land, to establish themselves in which they had emigrated from Egypt. Their leader with his usual confidence of success thus addresses them: "Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, "which the Lord our God doth give unto us. "Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before "thee; go up, and possess it, as the Lord God of "thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither "be discouraged *." But the people propose to adopt some precautions, which human prudence would naturally dictate. "We will send men "before us (say they) to mark out the land, and "bring us word again, by what way we must go up, "and into what cities we shall come." They are sent: they report; "The land is a good land, and "fruitful; but the people be strong that dwell in the "land, and the cities are walled, and very great: we "be not able to go up against the people, for they "are stronger than we: all the people that we saw "in it are men of great stature; we were in our "own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in "their sight †."

At this discouraging report this timid and unwarlike race were filled with the deepest terrors: "All "the

* Deut. i. 20, 21.

† For this entire transaction vide Numb. xiii. & xiv.

"the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; "and the people wept that night. And they mur- "mured against Moses and Aaron; and the whole "congregation said unto them, Would to God we "had died in the land of Egypt, or would to God "we had died in the wilderness. And wherefore "hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall "by the sword, that our wives and our children "should be a prey? were it not better for us to "return to Egypt?" In vain did Moses and Aaron fall on their faces before all the congregation; in vain did two of the chief men, who had searched out the land, and who adhered to them, represent its fertility, and endeavour to inspire the host with a pious confidence in the divine protection. So incurable was their despair, and so violent their rebellion, that they resented as the grossest crime the advice of these honest and spirited men: for "all the congregation bade stone them with stones "till they die." They even determine to abandon altogether the enterprize; to depose their leader in contempt of the divine authority which he claimed, to elect another captain, and return to Egypt.

At this crisis, what conduct would human prudence have dictated? No other, surely, than to soothe the multitude till this extreme panic might have time to subside; then gradually to revive their confidence, by recalling to their view the miseries of that servitude from which they had escaped, the extraordinary success which had hitherto attended

their

their efforts, and the consequent probability of their overcoming the difficulties by which they were now dispirited; then gradually leading them from one assault, where circumstances were most likely to ensure victory, to another, till their courage was reanimated, and the great object of their enterprize might be again attempted with probability of success. But how strange and unparalleled is the conduct of the Jewish leader! He denounces against this whole rebellious multitude the extreme wrath of God: instead of animating them to resume their enterprize, he commands them never to resume it; instead of encouraging them to hope for success, he assures them they never shall succeed: he suffers them not to return to Egypt, yet he will not permit them to invade Canaan. He denounces to them, that they shall continue under his command; that he would march and countermarch them for forty years in the wilderness, until every one of the rebellious multitude then able to bear arms should perish there; and that then, and not till then, should their children resume the invasion of Canaan, and infallibly succeed in it. "Say unto them, As "truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken "in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases "shall fall in this wilderness; all of you, from twenty "years old and upward, which have murmured "against me. But your little ones, which ye said "should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they "shall know the land which ye have despised. And

"your children shall wander forty years in this "wilderness, until your carcases be wasted in it: "I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all "this evil congregation that are gathered together "against me: in this wilderness they shall be "consumed, and there they shall die. Joshua and "Caleb, they shall come into the land, for they had "not joined to make the congregation murmur "against the Lord."

Now let me ask in seriousness and simplicity of mind, can we believe that such a denunciation as this could have been uttered by any human being, not distracted with the wildest frenzy, if it had not been dictated by the clearest divine authority; or if uttered, whether it could have been received by an entire nation, with any other sensation than that of scorn and contempt, if the manifestation of the divine power from which it proceeded, and by which alone it could be executed, had not been most certain and conspicuous? But can we be sure, it is said, that it was ever uttered? I answer, yes; because it was assuredly fulfilled; and its accomplishment forms the last particular I shall notice in the history of this unparalleled expedition, as exhibiting a fact *partly natural*; for the existence of a whole nation in a particular country for a certain length of time, is an event of a natural kind, yet inseparably connected with a continued miraculous interposition, which if not real, no human imagination could have invented, and no human credulity believed;

believed; I mean the miraculous sustenance of the whole Jewish nation, of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, for forty years, within the compass of a barren wilderness, where a single caravan of travellers could never subsist, even marching through it by the shortest route, without having brought with them their own provisions; yet so long the host of Israel remained in it: they had first refused to obey their leader's order to invade Canaan; then when they heard the denunciation of divine vengeance, "all the people mourned greatly, "and early the next morning they rose up and said, "Lo, we be here, and we will go up to the place "which the Lord hath promised: for we have "sinned." But "Moses said, Wherefore now do "you transgress the commandment of the Lord? "but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord "is not among you; that ye be not smitten before "your enemies. But they presumed to go up unto "the hill-top: nevertheless, the Ark of the Covenant "of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the "camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites "which dwelt in that hill, came down, and smote "them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah*." And "they returned and wept before the Lord; but "the Lord would not hearken unto their voice, nor "give ear unto them. And ye abode," says their leader, (recapitulating the history of this event†) "in Kadesh (where it took place) many days. And "the

* Numb. xiv. 39, &c. † Deut. i. 45, 46. & ii. 14.

" the space in which we came from Kadesh, until " we came over the brook Zered, was thirty-eight " years; until all the generation of the men of war " were wasted from among the host, as the Lord " sware unto them." Then, and not before, was the Jewish host permitted to invade the country in which they were to settle: then, and not before, were they permitted to combat and to conquer.

In the interval they were fed with food from heaven, even with *manna, until in the plains of Jericho they did eat of the corn of the land; and the manna ceased the morrow after they had eaten the old corn of the land.

Here then I close this argument; and contend, that the existence of the Jewish nation in the wilderness for forty years, their submission during that period to the authority of their leader, without attempting either to return to Egypt or to invade Canaan, is a fact which cannot be accounted for, without admitting the uninterrupted and conspicuous interference of the power of Jehovah, miraculously sustaining and governing this his chosen people; and by consequence establishing the divine original of the Mosaic Law.

* Vide Exod. xvi. and Josh. v, 12.

PART I.

LECTURE VI.

*ADMITTING the Authenticity of the Pentateuch, the miracles recorded in the four last books of it are unquestionably true and clearly supernatural—Leslie's four marks of certainty—Their application to the Mosaic miracles—First character, the facts public—Second, clearly supernatural—Various instances of this—Third and fourth, recorded by public monuments and commemorative rites, commencing at the time of the facts—Instanced in the tribe of Levi—The three great feasts—The entire Jewish ritual—The form of government—The distribution of property, &c.—*RECAPITULATION *and Conclusion of the* FIRST PART.

PART I.

LECT. VI.

DEUTERONOMY, vi. 20, &c.

"WHEN thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What "mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judge- "ments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? "Then shalt thou say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's "bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt "with a mighty hand. And the Lord shewed signs and "wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and "upon all his household, before our eyes. And the Lord "commanded us to do all these statutes."

SUCH was the injunction of the Jewish Lawgiver to his people. He addresses them as witnesses of the miracles wrought for their deliverance; and they were to hand down to their children the statutes and judgments of their Law, derived from the command of God, whose interposition these miracles proved. It shall be my object in this Lecture to shew, that this appeal of the Jewish Lawgiver to his nation, as eye-witnesses of the miracles he had wrought, is just and conclusive; that the supernatural facts he alludes to, must certainly have taken place;

place; the Law he established being founded on the belief of these facts, and proving their reality.

This has been a topic frequently discussed; and it would but ill suit the importance of the subject, if, in a vain affectation of novelty, I were to decline adopting the clear and decisive mode of reasoning, which Dr. Leslie has employed on this subject, in his "*Short Method with the Deists*;" which seems to me to comprise the substance of every thing material which can be adduced on this argument. I shall therefore do little more than state his mode of proof, and shew the justice of its application to the Mosaic miracles.

This celebrated Author establishes the truth of the Mosaic miracles, by applying to them four rules; which, whenever they can be truly applied to any events, exclude every reasonable doubt of their reality. These rules are, first, That the facts be of such a nature as that men's senses can clearly and fully judge of them; and in the second place, That they be performed publicly. These two rules make it impossible for any such facts to be imposed upon men at the time they are said to take place, because every man's senses would detect the imposture. The third rule is, That not only public monuments be kept up, but that some outward actions be constantly performed in memory of the facts thus publicly wrought; and the fourth, That these monuments be set up, and these actions and observances be instituted, at the very time when

those events took place, and continued without interruption afterwards. These two rules render it impossible that the belief of any facts should be imposed upon the credulity of after ages, when the generation asserted to have witnessed them has expired: for, whenever such facts come to be recounted, if not only monuments are said to remain of them, but that public actions and observances had been constantly used to commemorate them by the nation appealed to, ever since they had taken place; the deceit must be immediately detected, by no such monuments appearing, and by the experience of every individual, who could not but know that no such actions or observances had ever been used by them, to commemorate any such events.

The part of this argument which its able author places last, even that the books containing the account of the Mosaic miracles and institutions, were written at the time of the events, and by eye-witnesses, has been, I trust, sufficiently established. We are therefore fully prepared to examine particularly the detail of the miracles themselves, and to enquire, how far the four marks of truth which have been enumerated, can apply to them.

We may perhaps, in applying these rules to miraculous facts, vary with propriety the mode of expression their author has adopted, and state them to be, first, that the facts be performed publicly; and secondly, that they be of such a nature, that men's senses can certainly perceive, both that the events

events are real, and their origin supernatural. Now, that both these characters belong to the Mosaic miracles, is evident. That the facts were most public is undoubted; the plagues in Egypt were witnessed by the whole nation of the Jews, and felt by all the Egyptians; at the Red Sea, the Jews passed through, and saw the whole host of Pharaoh perish; for forty years were all the Jews sustained in the wilderness with food from heaven; and for "forty years their raiment waxed not old, neither "did their foot swell*." Sometimes they were supplied with water from the flinty rock; and always they beheld the † cloud of the Lord upon the tabernacle by day, and the fire by night, throughout all their journeys.

At the promulgation of the Law from Mount Sinai, ‡ all the people perceived the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpets, and the mountains smoking.

On the rebellion of § Korah and his company, the whole congregation were gathered together, and saw the ground cleave asunder and swallow them up; "And all Israel," says the historian, "fled at "the cry of them." And at Jordan "the waters "stood and rose up upon an heap; and all the "Israelites passed over on dry ground in the midst "of Jordan ‖."

Here

* Deut. viii. 4.
† Exod. xl. 38.
‡ Exod. xx. 18.
§ Numb. xvi.
‖ Joshua, iii. 16 & 17.

Here then were a series of facts, witnessed certainly by above two millions of souls, who remained collected in one camp for forty years; an assembly so great probably never before or since remained collected in one body for so long a period.

If then this whole nation had not been entirely without eyes and ears, if they were not bereft of reason and sense, it was impossible that, at the time these facts were said to take place, they could have been persuaded of their existence, had they not been real. The frequent appeals to the whole nation as eye-witnesses of them, with which the Pentateuch abounds, would have been regarded as the ravings of a lunatic, instead of being received as the solemn dictates of an inspired Lawgiver.

But though it must be impossible to have persuaded any nation, at the time of the events, that such facts existed, if they did not exist; perhaps it may be said, They were deceived as to their miraculous nature: these supposed miracles were either artful delusions practised on their senses, or natural though uncommon appearances, which the superior genius and science of their legislator enabled him to persuade a barbarous multitude, were supernatural and divine.

To judge of this, let us proceed to consider the particular narrative of these facts in the Pentateuch; which we have already proved, discovers in its style* and

* Vide supra, Lect. II.

and structure the utmost artlessness, particularity, and fairness; the most natural * coincidence between the different parts of the narrative; and the most exact suitableness of the different allusions to the facts, with the various circumstances and causes which introduce such allusions.

Now, though some † few of the facts alleged in the Pentateuch as miraculous, have been the subject of objection and dispute; far the greater number are such, that, admitting them to be real, no scepticism can find a plausible pretext to question their supernatural original. In the plagues inflicted upon Egypt, it is true that visible agents were in most instances employed, and these producing effects correspondent to their natural powers. But their introduction, their degree and their continuance, are plainly subservient to the command of the Jewish Lawgiver; and this when it was impossible he should have any natural power, to hasten, to limit, or to direct their operations. Yet that he exercised such a power, every instance proves. When he denounces to Pharaoh, that swarms of flies should infest his land; and again, that a grievous hail should lay it waste; and afterwards, that the locusts should consume it; he foretels and fixes the precise time when these judgments should take place. ‡ "To-morrow shall this sign be in the land." "To-morrow,

* Vide Lect. III. & IV.

† As to the most important of these facts, vide the Appendix.

‡ Exod. viii. 10. 23. ix. 5. 18. x. 4. & 5.

" To-morrow, about this time, I will cause it to " rain a very grievous hail throughout all the land " of Egypt." " To-morrow I will bring locusts " into thy coasts, and they shall cover the face of " the earth."

And as the infliction, so also the removal, of these punishments took place, only on the command and according to the prediction of this delegate of divine power. " Behold," says he to Pharaoh, on his apparent repentance, " I will go out from thee, " and I will entreat the Lord, that the swarms of " flies may depart to-morrow." And again, " As " soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread " abroad my hands unto the Lord: and the thunder " shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; " that thou mayest know, how that the earth is the " Lord's."

Thus also these plagues were unprecedented in their nature and degree. " Behold," says Moses, " to-morrow about this time I will cause it to rain " a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in " Egypt, since the foundation thereof, until now. " Send therefore, and gather thy cattle, and all that " thou hast in the field; for on every man and beast " which shall be found in the field, and shall not be " brought home, the hail shall come down upon " them, and they shall die. So he that feared the " Lord among the servants of Pharaoh, made his " servants and his cattle flee into his house; and he " that regarded it not, left them in the field. And

" the

" the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, " all that was in the field, both man and beast; " fire mingled with hail, very grievous, such as there " was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it " became a nation."

Thus also the locusts were such as the Egyptians had not seen*; " for they covered the face of the " whole earth, and went up over all the land of " Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very " grievous; before them," says Moses, " there were " no such locusts as they, neither after them shall " be such."

Still more decisively to prove that these awful punishments were under the immediate control of the God of Israel; they were not permitted to affect his chosen people, though from their nature nothing intervened to prevent their doing so, and no human power could limit their effects. † " I the " Lord will sever between the land of Goshen, in " which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies " shall be there; to the end that thou mayest " know that I am the Lord in the midst of the " earth." Thus also the ‡ hail destroyed " every " herb of the field, and brake down every tree of " the field, throughout the land of Egypt: only " in the land of Goshen, where the Children of " Israel dwelt, was there no hail." And again, Moses denounces to Pharaoh, " If thou refuse to " let my people go, behold, the hand of the Lord " is

* Exod. x. 14. † Ibid. viii. 22. ‡ Ibid. ix. 25. & 26.

" is upon thy cattle which is in the field: there shall
" be a very grievous murrain. But the Lord shall
" sever between the cattle of Israel, and the cattle
" of Egypt; and there shall nothing die of all that
" is the Childrens of Israel." And still more signally in the *two last dreadful visitations, which completely subdued the Egyptians. The first, of " thick
" darkness throughout all the land of Egypt; so
" that they saw not one another, neither rose any
" from his place for three days, while all the Chil-
" dren of Israel had light in their dwellings." And last of all, when " the Lord smote all the first-
" born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of
" Pharaoh who sat on his throne, to the first-born
" of the captive in the dungeon. Of the Children
" of Israel there died not one." Their doors were to be marked with the blood of the Passover; " For the Lord," says Moses, " when he passeth
" through to smite the Egyptians, he will not suffer
" the destroyer to come into your houses to smite
" you."

Of all these facts is it not most evident, that they could never have been believed at the time they were said to take place, if they had not been real; and that if real, they must have been miraculous? We see every element and every class of animated beings subservient to the command of Moses; he gives notice when they shall begin, and when they shall cease their operations; he sets them their bounds,

* Exod. x. 22, 23. and xii. 29.

bounds, beyond which they shall not pass; and while the raging storm and the silent pestilence sweep away thousands on every side, they presume not to touch the chosen race of Israel. The destroying angel selects from each family through the land of Egypt the single victim pointed out, and while with unerring hand he aims at this the shaft of death, he passes over every habitation of Jacob, marked with the sign appointed by the divine command. Do we not in all this discover the plain operation of that Being, who alone is the God of nature, and the Lord of life; whose will controls every element, and directs every event?

Nor is the same Almighty hand less conspicuous during the entire passage of the Israelites to the promised land; a nation amounting to some millions of souls, with their flocks and herds, are for forty years frequently supplied with water out of the flinty rock, and constantly with a regular quantity of food from heaven: and lest by the constancy and sameness of this supply they should forget its supernatural original, they find it regularly interrupted, and even its nature altered, in conformity to the divine institution of the sabbath. "Six days ye shall "gather the manna," says Moses*, "but on the "seventh shall be none: Gather it each day accord-"ing to your eating, and let no man leave of it till "the morning." In conformity to this, they found that if on any of the first five days they gathered more

* Vide Exod. xvi. from 17 to the end.

more than that day's consumption required, as if they distrusted the divine supply for the next day, it became putrid and unfit for use: whereas, when on the sixth day they gathered twice as much, and laid it up till the morning, it remained fresh and wholesome. And when some went out on the seventh day to gather it, they found none; and the Lord said unto Moses, "How long refuse ye to keep my "commandments and my laws? See, for that the "Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he "giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two "days: let no man go out of his place on the "seventh day." Who can doubt whether this was miraculous?

Thus also when the Law was delivered from Mount Sinai, it was at an appointed time. It was not therefore any awful phænomenon of nature which accidentally occurred, and which the Lawgiver took advantage of, to impress his Laws on an ignorant and terrified multitude. They had full notice: for * the Lord said unto Moses, "Go unto "the people, and sanctify yourselves to-day and to-"morrow, and be ready against the third day: for "the third day the Lord will come down in the "sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai." And when the appointed time arrived, this awful promulgation of the divine Law took place, with such circumstances as no human power could produce; for "Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, "because

* Exod. xix. from 10 to the end.

" because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and " the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a fur- " nace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And " when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and " waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God " answered him by a voice," and delivered the ten commandments distinctly, in the hearing of the multitude. For thus Moses appeals to them in attestation of this fact, after reciting these commandments: * " These words the Lord spake unto " all your assembly in the mount, out of the midst " of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick dark- " ness, with a great voice, and he added no more."

Equally signal was the miraculous nature of the punishment inflicted on Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Had the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up without any previous notice on the part of Moses, and had this been afterwards ascribed by him to a divine interference for the punishment of his enemies, some shadow of objection might have been advanced. But what can we say, when before the event, on Korah's, Dathan's, and Abiram's resistance to the authority of Moses and Aaron, we find Moses telling Korah, " Be thou and all thy " company before the Lord, thou and they, and " Aaron to-morrow." On to-morrow they gather all the congregation unto the door of the tabernacle. On the warning of Moses, the people got up from the tents of these rebels on every side: Dathan and Abiram

* Deut. v. particularly 22 & 23.

Abiram stand in the doors of their tents with their families, in defiance of Moses, and he pronounces this awful sentence: * "Hereby ye shall know that "the Lord hath sent me to do all these works: for "I have not done them of mine own mind. But if "the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open "her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that "appertain unto them, and they go down quick "into the pit; then shall ye understand that these "men have provoked the Lord. And it came to "pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these "words, the ground clave asunder that was under "them: they, and all that appertained to them, "went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed "upon them: and there went out a fire from the "Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty "men that offered incense." What human power could thus command the earth and the heavens to unite in executing instantaneous vengeance on those rebels, who despised that God whose interference to secure obedience to his legislator they had so often seen? An authority, the opposition to which was thus fearfully punished by the God of nature, was assuredly divine.

And to close this enumeration; the passage by Joshua over Jordan was assuredly as miraculous as any of the facts which we have recounted; it was not an accidental occurrence, magnified into a miracle. † Joshua said unto the people, "Sanctify "yourselves:

* Numb. xvi. particularly 28, &c. † Josh. iii.

" yourselves: for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders " among you." And on the morrow he said, " Hereby ye shall know that the living God is " among you, and that he will without fail drive " out from before you the Canaanites, &c. Behold, " the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the " earth passeth before you into Jordan. And it shall " come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of " the priests that bear the Ark of the Lord, the " Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of " Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off " from the waters that come down from above; and " they shall stand upon an heap." To make this miracle more signal, the river was then naturally most impassable; for, says the sacred historian, " Jordan " overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest. " And it came to pass when the feet of the priests " that bore the ark were dipped in the brim of the " water, that the waters which came down from " above stood and rose up upon an heap very far " from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and " those that came down toward the sea of the plain, " even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the " people passed over right against Jericho. And the " priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the " Lord, stood firm on dry ground in the midst of " Jordan, until all the people were passed clean " over Jordan." It requires no argument to prove this fact miraculous: it was not accidental, or it could not have been foreseen: it was not natural,

for

for the river was at its height; and the waters that had been descending stood on an heap: it was not the effect of art, for any artificial alteration of the channel the people must have known; and besides, the effect would not have been instantaneous.

On the whole, may we not conclude certainly, that no such facts as these could have been imposed upon any nation, at the time they were said to have taken place; and that if they took place, they were assuredly miraculous?

Let us next consider, whether it is credible that the belief of these facts could have been introduced, at any period subsequent to the supposed time of their existence, if they had never really taken place. Now we assert this is impossible; because not only public monuments were preserved, but many public institutions and ceremonies were constantly performed amongst the Jews, in memory of the facts thus publicly wrought; and these monuments and observances state themselves to have been instituted, and to have commenced, at the very time when these facts took place. To prove this, we must again resort to the narrative of the Pentateuch; but the proof may be brief, for the fact is notorious.

We find then many public memorials of the most signal miracles, not only in the names given to the places where they had been wrought, from the event and at the time, but in sensible objects and monuments set up at the moment the miracles had taken place, and constantly preserved with the most religious

religious reverence. Thus the tables of stone in the ark, were a monument of the miraculous deliverance of the Law of Sinai: the vessel of manna, of the miraculous food in the wilderness: Aaron's rod that budded, and the censer of Korah and his company formed into large plates for covering the altar, were a memorial to the Children of Israel of their offence, and miraculous punishment*. The Brazen Serpent, by looking on which God ordered the people should be healed of the bites inflicted by the serpents in the wilderness, was preserved even to the days of king Hezekiah†. Thus also twelve stones were taken out of the midst of Jordan, at the time of the miraculous passage over it, and set up by Joshua at Gilgal, as a memorial unto the Children of Israel for ever. How irresistible is the reasoning of Leslie‡ on this last monument: "To "form our argument," says he, "let us suppose "that there never was any such thing as that passage "over Jordan; that these stones at Gilgal were set "up on some other occasion, in some after age; and "then, that some designing man invented this book "of Joshua, and said it had been written at that "time, and gave this stonage at Gilgal for a testi-"mony of its truth. Would not every body say to "him,

* Vide Heb. ix. 4. Exod. xvi. 33. Numb. xvii. 3. & 10. and xvi. 39.

† Vide Numb. xxi. and 2 Kings, xviii.

‡ Vide Leslie's short Method with the Deists, p. 16, in 3d edit. Dublin 1758.

" him, We know the stonage at Gilgal, but we " never before heard of this reason, nor of this book " of Joshua. Where has it been all this time; and " when, and how came you, after so many ages, to " find it? Besides, this book tells us, that after this " passage over Jordan, it was ordained to be taught " our children from age to age; and therefore, that " they were always to be instructed in the meaning " of this monument. But we were never taught it, " nor did we ever teach our children any such event. " Thus impossible would it be to gain credit for a " fact thus circumstanced, after the period when it " was supposed to take place; and surely at the time " it would be as strange such a fact should gain credit, " as that all the inhabitants of London should be " persuaded that any man had divided the Thames, " and let them pass through it at noon-day on dry " ground, the waters standing in an heap. How is " it possible to suppose such a fact, or the memorial " of such a fact, should gain credit in any age or " nation, if unsupported by reality?"

But we have still stronger proofs, that the belief of the miracles on which the Jewish Law was supported, could never have been imposed upon the nation at any subsequent age, from the very nature of their religion and government, and the meaning and purport of almost all their rites and institutions. These were confessedly cotemporary with Moses, commencing at the very time the miracles are supposed to have been wrought; and

were so directly and clearly commemorative of them, that it may be truly said, we have two histories of Moses and his miracles; one in the books which bear his name, the other engraved in the laws and ceremonies of the Jews; the practice of which is, as it were, a living witness not only of the general history of the Pentateuch, but of the most signal miracles which it contains. A few instances will prove this beyond dispute.

The tribe of Levi was set apart *, not merely for the service of religion, but in memory of the miraculous destruction of the first-born in Egypt. For the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, † "Behold, "I, even I, have taken the Levites from amongst the "Children

* Vide Exod. xiii. compared with Numb. iii. & viii. particularly Numb. iii. from ver. 40 to the end.

† I beg leave to call my reader's attention to one circumstance, connected with this separation of the Levites for the first-born of the Children of Israel, which (as it seems to me) it is scarcely to be conceived, any thing but reality could have suggested to the mind of any writer; or that any writer but an eye-witness of the event, would have thought of recording.

On the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians, "God "spake unto Moses (Exod. xiii. 1.) saying, Sanctify unto me "all the first-born among the Children of Israel, both of man "and beast: it is mine." We are afterwards told, that in about fourteen months after this, "The Lord spake unto "Moses, (Numb. iii. 11.) saying, And I, behold, I have taken "the Levites from among the Children of Israel, instead of all "the first-born among the Children of Israel: therefore the "Levites shall be mine; because all the first-born are mine: "for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of "Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both "man and beast: mine they shall be: I am the Lord." The

"Children of Israel, instead of all the first-born;
"for all the first-born are mine: for on the day
"that I smote all the first-born in the land of
"Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in
"Israel,

importance of this general fact, in proof of the miracle thus commemorated, I have noticed in this Lecture; and this statement of the general substitution of the Levites for the first-born is, I conceive, the only circumstance which any historian, not an immediate eye-witness, would have thought of recording. But we are shortly after told, that Moses was commanded to number all the males of the Levites from a month old and upwards; and that they were found to amount to 22,000. He is then commanded to number all the first-born of the males of the Children of Israel, and to "take the Levites instead of "all the first-born among the Children of Israel, and the cattle "of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle "of the Children of Israel." On thus numbering them, the first-born males of the Children of Israel were found to amount to 22,273; and we are told (Numb. iii. 46.) that the Lord commanded Moses, "For those that are to be "redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of "the first-born of the Children of Israel, which are more than "the Levites; thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the "poll, after the shekel of the Sanctuary shalt thou take them "(the shekel is twenty gerahs:) and thou shalt give the money "wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto "Aaron, and to his sons. And Moses took the redemption-"money of them that were over and above them that were "redeemed by the Levites: of the first-born of the Children "of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and "threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the Sanc-"tuary. And Moses gave the money of them that were re-"deemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word "of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses." Now, on this narrative I ask, could any thing but REALITY have suggested such a circumstance? Would any but an EYE-WITNESS have recorded it?

"Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: "I am the Lord." And this separation of the Levites for the first-born of men, and this consecration of all the first-born of the flocks, and of the herds, as devoted to God, was not an institution for which this singular reason was arbitrarily assigned at a remote period from its original, when the true reason might be forgotten; but it was assigned at the time it took place, to be perpetually recorded as its true cause. "It shall be, saith the Lord, "when thy son asketh thee in time to come, What is "this? thou shalt say unto him, By strength of "hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, and "slew all the first-born in Egypt, both of man and "beast: therefore I sacrifice unto God all the first-"born of beasts, but the first-born of my children "I redeem *."

Further, the Jewish ritual appointed three great feasts, all of which were commemorative of the miraculous deliverance from Egypt. The † Passover expressly commemorated, and every ceremony of it indelibly recorded some circumstance of that memorable night when the destroying angel slew the first-born of Egypt, and passed over the houses of the Israelites. The month in which it took place was, from being the seventh, reckoned as the first month of the year, to mark it as the æra of this illustrious deliverance; it was eaten with bitter herbs, to remind

* Exod. xiii. 14 & 15. † Ibid. xii.

remind them of their severe bondage and servile food in Egypt; with unleavened bread, because the Egyptians in their terror urged them to depart, and would not allow them time to leaven their bread, for they said, We be all dead men. It was eaten in the posture of travellers just prepared for a journey, to mark its having immediately preceded their sudden and final departure from the house of bondage.

Another great feast was that of Tabernacles, accompanied with this singular ceremony: "Ye "shall take, saith the Lord, on the first day, the "boughs of goodly trees, to make booths; for all "that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths seven "days, that all your generations may know that I "made the Children of Egypt to dwell in booths, "when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I "am the Lord your God*."

A third great feast was the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover; to commemorate the miraculous deliverance of the Law from Mount Sinai, which took place fifty days after the destruction of the first-born, and their consequent march from Egypt, at a time of the year when the harvest usually closed; and the Law prescribed, that each head of a family should take of the first-fruits of the earth, and bring it to the place which the Lord should choose, to set it down before the altar of the Lord, with this solemn acknowledgment of the whole series of peculiar and miraculous providences which

* Levit. xxiii. 40, &c.

which the nation had experienced: "thou shalt say "and speak before the Lord thy God, A Syrian "ready to perish, was my father; and he went "down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, "and became there a nation great and mighty and "populous. And the Egyptians evil-entreated us, "and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. "And when we cried unto the Lord God of our "fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on "our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression. "And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with "a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and "with great terribleness, and with signs, and with "wonders. And he hath brought us into this place, "and hath given us this land, even a land which "floweth with milk and honey. And now behold, "I have brought the first fruits of the land, which "thou, O Lord, hast given me*."

Thus the three great annual feasts, when all the males of the nation assembled at the house of God, were solemn commemorations of the miraculous deliverance from Egypt; of the miraculous promulgation of the Law from Sinai; and of the manifold displays of divine protection and assistance, by which the Hebrew nation were put in possession of the promised land.

But the miraculous deliverance from Egypt was not commemorated by these great feasts alone; it was

* Deut. xxvi. 5—10.

was assigned as one reason for the observance of the sabbath day; it was the groundwork of the whole Jewish ritual, which was established in honour of God, who was the peculiar God of the Jews; "because he had brought them forth from the "house of bondage, from the land of Egypt*." The observances of this ritual, its new moons and feasts, and periodical sacrifices, were all directly or indirectly commemorative of this great event, which was thus recalled to the memory of the Jews, monthly, weekly, daily, while a vestige of their religion remained.

In addition to this, it must be recollected that the civil government of the Jews, the distribution and the tenure of property, and the most important regulations which affected it (about the grounds and authority of which men are always sufficiently solicitous, however indifferent they may be as to religion;) these were all founded on the belief of the Mosaic miracles, and many on a direct acknowledgment of them. Jehovah was acknowledged, not only as the God, but as the temporal King, of the Hebrew nation. Their religious and civil system were inseparably combined; God was the author of their Laws, which could not be † altered without consulting him. The judges and kings were his viceroys, enjoying only a delegated authority ‡. The High Priests and the Levites were civil

* Exod. xxxiv. 23. † Deut. iv. 1 & 2.
‡ Numb. xxvii. 15, &c. and Deut. xvii. 15.

civil magistrates and * judges, as well as ministers of religion. The Sanhedrim, the princes of the congregation, the elders, the heads of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, of tens, all traced their authority to a divine appointment †. The original distribution of property in the Jewish nation, was founded on this principle, that the Lord Jehovah having been the sole power which gave them possession of the land of Canaan, each individual was to consider himself as holding his portion of it directly by a divine grant, on such tenure and under such conditions as that grant prescribed. And these conditions were many of them of such a nature, as implied a direct acknowledgment of the miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and a full conviction of a perpetual and peculiar providence over the Jewish race; a conviction which could be grounded only on the belief of these miracles. Thus the land was originally divided by the divine command; and all property alienated from any family, was to be restored to its original proprietors every fiftieth year, or year of jubilee. Mark now the reason assigned by the Law as authorizing this regulation ‡: "The "land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is "mine; ye are strangers and sojourners with me, "saith the Lord." Again, every Jew was to be released from all personal servitude every seventh year.

* Deut. xvii. 8—12.

† Numb. xi. 16 & 17. Deut. i, 15.

‡ Lev. xxv. particularly ver. 23. 48 & 55.

year. "Then shall he depart from thee (says the "Law,) for they are my servants, whom I brought "forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be "sold as bondmen."

But the most extraordinary injunction of all, with respect to property, and the most decisive on the present point, was that of the sabbatical year. "Every seventh year," says the Law *, "shall be "a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for "the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor "prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its "own accord of thy harvest, thou shalt not reap, "neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed; "for it is a year of rest unto the land."

We may well ask what sanction or authority could induce any nation to receive so singular an ordinance? The sanction which enforced it on the Jews was this: "If ye shall say, What shall we eat "the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor "gather in our increase: Then will I command my "blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall "bring forth fruit for three years. Ye shall do my "statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; "and the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat "your fill, and dwell therein in safety. But if ye "will not hearken unto me, and will not do all "these commandments; I also will set my face "against you, and I will bring the land into deso-"lation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall "be

* Lev. xxv. 4 & 5.

" be astonished at it; and I will scatter you among " the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, " and your land shall be desolate, and your cities " waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, " as long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it " did not rest in your sabbaths, wherein ye dwelt " upon it*."

How incredible is it, that any legislator would have ventured to propose such a Law as this, or any people have submitted to receive it, except in consequence of the fullest conviction on both sides, that a divine authority had dictated this Law, and that a peculiar Providence would constantly facilitate its execution. When this Law, therefore, was proposed and received, such a conviction must have existed in both the Jewish legislator and the Jewish people. Since, then, nothing could have produced this conviction, but the experience or the belief of some such miraculous interposition as the history of the Pentateuch details, the very existence of this Law is a standing monument, that when it was given the Mosaic miracles were fully believed. Now this Law was coeval with the witnesses of the miracles themselves. If then the facts were so plain and public, that those who witnessed them could not have been mistaken as to their existence or miraculous nature, the reality of the Mosaic miracles is clear and undeniable.

Let

* Lev. xxv. & xxvi. particularly xxvi. 34 & 35.

Let me now very briefly RECAPITULATE the process of the argument which I have adduced in this series of Lectures, to establish the certainty of the Mosaic miracles, and by consequence, the divine original of the Jewish religion. The relation of them is found in a work which contains the Religion and Laws of a numerous and not uncivilized nation; and which it has been shewn * they have ALWAYS RECEIVED as written by their legislator himself, at the time the facts took place, and as the only authentic code of their Religion and their Laws, as well as the only sure record of their history, and the authority fixing the tenure on which private property was held, and the regulations affecting it established. Now I think I may venture to assert, that there occurs not in the history of mankind a single instance of any nation being so grossly imposed upon, as universally to receive a forged book of Laws, and submit to its authority not only as genuine, but divine; especially when the tenor of these Laws is such (as I endeavoured to prove) that no period can be assigned in the history of the nation, when their introduction would not have been likely to excite great opposition; and that no body of men, nay, no individual, can be pointed out, whose interest it was to form such a fabrication, or gain it that universal credit it certainly acquired, with the divided subjects of the kings of Judah and Israel,

* Vide Lecture I.

Israel, and the hostile tribes of the Jews and the Samaritans.

To give further satisfaction on this important point, and to evince that the Pentateuch was not a compilation of Laws which were indeed acknowledged, but which were combined with a fictitious history, and this implicitly received from the influence of national vanity, or party and personal interest; I have examined the INTERNAL STRUCTURE of the Pentateuch *, and from this (the most unerring criterion, whenever it can be applied) I endeavoured to evince, that the facts it relates, so far at least as they *were not miraculous*, were undoubtedly true; and that the relation it delivers may be depended on, as exact and faithful even in the most minute particulars: because it is evidently written with the most perfect artlessness and simplicity; with such particularity of time and place, and person and circumstance, as none but an eye-witness can be reasonably supposed to have preserved; and with such strict impartiality, as leaves no room to doubt that it delivers every circumstance without any attempt to disguise or alter it. The relation may therefore be depended on, as faithfully drawn up by SOME EYE-WITNESS.

In the *third* Lecture I went further, and endeavoured to prove, that as the Pentateuch had been shewn to be the relation of SOME EYE-WITNESS TO THE

* Vide Lecture II.

THE FACTS; so also it carried internal evidence, that this eye-witness was NO OTHER THAN MOSES HIMSELF, and that it was written with the strongest regard to truth: because on comparing the different books of it together, an exact agreement appeared in the different parts of the narrative, as well with each other as with the different situations in which Moses its supposed author is placed, and the different views and feelings which would naturally arise from them; and this, discovering itself in COINCIDENCES SO MINUTE, SO LATENT, SO INDIRECT, AND EVIDENTLY UNDESIGNED, that nothing could have produced them but reality and truth, influencing the mind and directing the pen of the legislator.

Further, lest it should be imagined the common facts were indeed *related by* Moses himself, but that the miracles may have been afterwards interpolated by some different and later hand, I endeavoured to prove in the *fourth* Lecture, that the same exact suitableness of the sentiments and language of Moses to the situations in which he was placed, the same NATURAL AND UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES between the address to the people in Deuteronomy, and the direct narrative in the preceding books, which had been observed *as to the common facts*, were equally apparent in the manner in which the *miracles were related* and alluded to; and that the whole series of facts, common and miraculous, are blended together

in

in one uniform and consistent narrative; all related by the same writer, and with equal artlessness, fidelity, and precision, and equal regard to nature and truth.

Having thus far pointed out the general character of the Pentateuch; having evinced that its common facts are beyond all doubt true, *as well as inseparably connected with, and DEPENDENT ON THE MIRACULOUS; and shewn, that the relation of all the facts, both common and miraculous, is evidently the work of an eye-witness, bearing with it the strongest internal characters of simplicity, impartiality, and truth; also, that it is next to a certainty, that this eye-witness could be no other than Moses himself: Having thus prepared the way; I have in *this Lecture* considered the *particular detail of the miracles* recorded in the Pentateuch and the proofs on which they depend; and it has I trust appeared, that the four (I may venture to call them) infallible marks of truth, which the acute mind of the celebrated Leslie has pointed out, clearly apply to them; that they were in the *first place* wrought most publicly; two nations affected by them, and above two millions of souls for forty years together witnessing them. *Next*, that they were of such a nature, that men's senses could not be mistaken, either as to the existence of the facts, or their reason deluded in ascribing to them a supernatural original. They could not therefore

* Vide Lecture V.

therefore have gained credit in any nation at the time they were said to have taken place, if they had not been real. And if we suppose any attempt to impose them on the credulity of after ages at any subsequent period, this also has appeared impossible; because, *in the third place*, the history of these miracles states, not only that sensible monuments of many of them were set up from the very time of the events, but that, *lastly*, outward actions and observances, public rites and institutions, had been appointed to commemorate them, commencing at the very time of their existence, and afterwards uninterruptedly continued.

In a word, it has I trust appeared, that these miracles were the foundation of the entire frame of the Hebrew polity and religion, clearly and indelibly recorded in all their rites and institutions; expressly commemorated in the three great festivals of the Jewish ritual, and recognized as the principles on which the tenure and regulations of property were founded; a point the more important, because however cold and indifferent nations sometimes become about religion, they never become careless as to property. And finally, we have observed in the Hebrew laws and ritual, a connection between the religion and government, of so close a nature, and regulations of so singular a kind, as evidently presuppose the expectation of a peculiar Providence: an expectation which could be founded on nothing but the certainty

certainty of the Mosaic miracles, and which therefore forms the strongest proof of their reality, and the most authentic record of their existence. From all this we are, I think, warranted in concluding, That the MIRACLES ASCRIBED TO THE JEWISH LAWGIVER WERE UNDOUBTEDLY REAL; AND THEREFORE HIS MISSION UNDOUBTEDLY DIVINE.

END OF PART THE FIRST.

LECTURES

ON

THE FOUR LAST BOOKS

OF THE

PENTATEUCH.

PART II.

ON THE

THEOLOGICAL, MORAL, AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

OF

THE MOSAIC LAW.

LECTURE I.

THEOLOGY of the Mosaic Law—General subject and arrangement of this Part—Origin, nature and effects of idolatry—Corruption of patriarchal religion—By the worship of the heavenly bodies—The elements—Deified men — Egyptian hieroglyphics introduce the worship of animals and vegetables, &c.—Connexion of idolatry with magic, &c.—Idolatry not to be checked by ordinary means—Vices attending it—Design of covenant with Abraham—Jewish scheme conducted according to the analogy of nature—Theology of the Mosaic Law—Declares the self-existence of God—His unity —His moral perfections— His providence — Such a theology affords a strong presumptive argument of a divine revelation.

PART II.

LECT. I.

THEOLOGY OF THE JEWISH LAW.

EXODUS, iii. 14, 15.

" AND God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said,
" Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM
" hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto
" Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel,
" The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the
" God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto
" you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial
" unto all generations."

IN the series of Lectures which I am now called upon to deliver, it is my purpose to endeavour to illustrate and defend that part of revelation, which contains the scheme of directions and institutions promulgated from God to the Jews by the ministry of their celebrated Lawgiver.

In considering the Mosaic code as a system of religious doctrines and moral Laws, it seems necessary, first, to review the doctrines which it delivers, as to the existence and attributes of God: next, to develope the principles it lays down, and the precepts it inculcates, on the chief points of

moral duty: thirdly, to examine how far it supports these principles and precepts, by a suitable system of penal Laws; and by that institution of civil government, which the Jewish Lawgiver ascribes to the same divine authority from which his religious scheme originated. Having thus taken a general view of the Hebrew religion and government, we shall be prepared to estimate, on what foundation the chief objections against them rest; and whether the Mosaic institutions deserve to be slighted, as containing little more than a multitude of useless, burdensome, unmeaning ceremonies, ill calculated to promote true religion and pure morality; or to be abused as inculcating unsocial principles, and commanding or encouraging inhuman practices.

To prepare our minds for estimating justly the necessity and importance of the Jewish code, as a system of religious institutions, it is necessary to recal to our recollection the nature, extent, and effects of that gross idolatry, which had overspread the world at the time of its promulgation; since the Jewish Lawgiver states it to be one chief design of that system of religious and civil institutions, which he delivered to his nation by the appointment of God, to guard them against the infection of idolatry, and its attendant crimes; to separate unto himself a holy people, who by a steady adherence to the code of Laws he had prescribed, should preserve amongst them a system of rational faith, and pure morality. "When the Lord thy God shall cut off

"the nations from before thee, take heed to thyself "that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, "How did these nations serve their gods? even so "will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto "the Lord thy God; for every abomination to the "Lord which he hateth have they done unto their "gods; for even their sons and their daughters "they have burned in the fire to their gods. "Whatsoever thing I shall command you, observe "to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish "from it*." From this emphatic injunction, not to add to or diminish aught from the Mosaic code, it appears that every part of it had a direct and necessary connexion with its main design; and that in order to discover and to expound the purpose and the relation of its various parts, it is necessary previously to consider the origin and the nature of that idolatry, against which it was calculated to guard.

That the worship of the one true God was the religion of Noah and his posterity before the dispersion of mankind, admits not a doubt. In this primitive and patriarchal religion, as incidentally disclosed by Moses, we discover the leading characters of that worship which was afterwards restored and guarded by the Jewish institutions; and which was calculated to preserve the knowledge of God, as the Creator of the world, by the observance of the

* Deut. xii. 29, &c.

the sabbath; as well as to inculcate the heinousness of sin, and typify the death of Christ, by the use of sacrifice. These simple ceremonies, together with the observance of the great rules of morality, and the prohibition of blood, in order to excite a stronger abhorrence against shedding the blood of one another, formed the entire exterior of the religion of Noah. The higher we are able to trace the history of every ancient nation, and the nearer we approach the sources of Eastern tradition, the more plain traces do we discover of this pure and simple worship; in which every father of a family acted as its priest, and assembled his progeny round the rustic altar of earth, to join in the sacrifice and the prayers he offered to the Creator and Governor of the world; to deprecate his wrath, and implore his blessing.

But the corrupt imaginations of men's hearts would not permit them to rest satisfied with a religion so pure and a ritual so simple: they looked to the sun * in its glory, they observed the moon and the stars walking in their brightness: they felt the benefits which through their influence were derived

* Vide Job, xxxi, 26, 27. Deut. iv. 19. Wisdom of Sol. xiii. 2, 3. Maimonides de Idololatria, the five first chapters. Diod. Siculus, Lib. I. cap. i. Euseb. Præpar. Evang. Lib. I. cap. ix. Herodotus, Clio, cap. cxxxi. Plato in Cratylus, p. 397.—Vide also Banier's Mythology, Book III. ch. iii. Leland's Advantage of Revelation, Part I. ch. iii. And Bryant's Analys. of Mythology, who affirms, the gods of Greece were originally one god, the sun. Vol. I. 305.

derived to men. They perhaps first considered them as the peculiar residence, or the chief ministers, or the most worthy representatives, of the Divinity; and in honouring and worshipping them, possibly conceived they were honouring the majesty, and fulfilling the will of their Creator: but they soon forgot the Creator whom they could not see, and gave his glory to the creature, whose existence was obvious to sense and captivating to the imagination. They seem to have conceived these luminaries to be moved and animated by distinct and independent spirits *, and therefore fit objects of immediate worship. To represent them in their absence, they erected pillars and statues on the tops of hills and mountains, or on pyramids and high buildings, raised for the purpose †; as if they could thus approach nearer the presence of their divinities. They set apart priests, and appointed times and sacrifices suited to the luminary they adored; hence the rising and the setting sun, the different seasons of the year, the new and full moon, the quarters of the heavens, the constellations and conjunctions of the stars, acquired a peculiar sacredness, and were conceived to possess a peculiar influence. It now became the interests of the priests to persuade men, that the ‡ pillars and statues set up as representatives

* Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. II. cap xv. to xxiii.

† Maimonides More Nevochim, Pars III. cap. xxix. p. 423. Winder's History of Knowledge, Vol. I. cap. xii. sect. 3.

‡ Maimonides ut supra. Herodot. Clio, cap. xiii.; and as to the use of mountains by the Persians, ibid.

representatives of the host of heaven, partook themselves of the same spirit, and communicated the same influence, as the sacred objects which they represented. Thus degraded man bowed down to the senseless image which he had himself set up, and forgot "that there was a lie in his right hand *."

From similar principles †, other men adopted different objects of worship; light and air, wind and fire, seemed to them active spirits, by whose beneficent energy all the operations of nature were conducted and controlled. Water and earth ‡ formed the universal parents, from which all things derived their origin, and to which they were still indebted for their sustenance. Thus these also became the objects, first of gratitude and admiration, next of awe and reverence. They also had their temples and emblematic images, their priests and worshippers.

But the folly of idolatry did not stop here. Not satisfied with adoring the host of heaven and the elements of nature, as the beneficent instruments of blessing; human weakness led man, first to tremble with horror, and then to bow down with a base and grovelling superstition to objects of an opposite nature, to every thing which seemed gloomy and malignant.

* Isaiah, xliv. 20.

† Wisdom, xiii. 2. Herod. Clio, cap. cxxx. Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. II. cap. xxviii. Hutchinson, Vol. I. p. 24, 25.

‡ Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. I. cap. x.

malignant. The * mixture of good and evil in the world suggested the idea of an evil principle, independent of and at war with the good, which it was necessary to soothe and conciliate. Darkness, storm and pestilence, the fates, the furies, and a multitude of similar objects, were honoured with a heart-debasing homage, by their terrified and trembling votaries. Nor was this yet the worst †: Gratitude to the inventor of useful arts, to the wise legislator, to the brave defender of his country, combined with the vanity of kings, the pride of conquerors, and even private affection and fond regret for the parent, the child, the consort, the friend, led men first to erect monuments to the memory of the dead, and then to worship them as divine. They sometimes transferred to these their fellow-creatures, the names of the luminaries and elements of nature, whose utility and beneficence they conceived were thus best represented. Hence, in process of time, arose a ‡ communication of attributes and honours, of priests and worshippers; and to close the degrading catalogue of idolatrous absurdities, and verify St. Paul's assertion, that "professing

* Vide Vossius de Idololatria, Lib. I. cap. v. Vossius however imputes, as appears to me, a much greater antiquity to this species of idolatry, than the testimony of history warrants. Vide the authorities quoted in the note, p. 184.

† Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. II. cap. xxiv. Leland's Advantage of Revelation, Part. I. ch. iv.

‡ Warb. Div. Leg. B. II. sect. vi.

" professing themselves to be wise they became " fools;" Egypt*, the chief seat of ancient wisdom and policy, of arts and letters, introduced objects of worship,

* Vide Selden de Diis Syris. Prologomena, cap. iii. p. 53.; and Bryant's Analys. of Mythology, Vol. I. p. 331, &c. Warburton's Divine Legat. B. IV. sect. iv. Vol. III. p. 197. Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. I. sect. xxxvi. Cudworth's Intellectual System, ch. iv. sect. xviii. This last learned writer maintains, that the Pagans generally acknowledged one supreme Deity. Admitting, however, his proofs to have all the force he himself attributes to them, they in no degree contradict the wide extent or practical mischiefs of idolatry, or the importance and necessity of a divine Revelation to counteract them; for, speaking of the difference which he supposes the Pagans generally to have made between the one supreme unmade Deity and their other inferior generated gods, he adds, " We are the " rather concerned to make out this difference, because it is " notorious that they did many times also confound them toge- " ther; attributing the government of the whole world to the " gods promiscuously, and without putting any due discrimi- " nation between the Supreme and inferior. The true reason " whereof seems to have been this; because they supposed the " supreme God not to do all immediately in the government " of the world, but to permit much to his inferior ministers: " one instance of which we had in Ovid, and innumerable such " others might be cited out of their most sober writers." Cudworth further grants, " That the same names were used to " express, sometimes the supreme God, sometimes the parts of " nature, sometimes an hero or deified man." Vide Cudworth, p. 255. Amidst this confusion, the difference occasionally acknowledged by speculative men, to exist between the Supreme Intelligence, and the subordinate but more immediate agents in the government of the world, could produce no practical effect in checking the contagion of idolatry and its attendant crimes, and rather served to aggravate the guilt of those, who " know- " ing God, honoured him not as God," than to enlighten or reform mankind.

worship, still more grovelling and base than any which had preceded. In some instances, the policy of its kings led them to encourage the preservation of those animals, whose labours they employed in cultivating the earth, or whose useful activity they saw exerted in destroying the venomous reptiles and destructive animals by which they were infested. For this purpose, they sanctified them as emblematic of some divinity, or even worshipped them as in themselves divine; while, on the other hand, the Egyptian priests, with an affectation of mysterious wisdom, expressed the attributes of God, the operations of the elements, the motions and influences of the heavenly bodies, the rising and falling of the Nile and its effects, by symbolic representations derived from the known and familiar properties of animals and even vegetables. Hence these became, first, representations of their divinities, and afterwards the direct objects of divine reverence. Thus man was taught to bow down to birds and beasts and creeping things, to plants and herbs, to stocks and stones. Nothing was too base for grovelling superstition to adore; the heavens, the earth, the air, the sea, each hill, each river, each wood, was peopled with imaginary deities; every nation, every city, every family, had its peculiar guardian gods. The name and reverence of the Supreme Father of the universe was banished from the earth; or, if remembered at all, men scrupled not to associate with him their basest idols; and deeming him too exalted

exalted and remote to regard human affairs, they looked to these idols as the immediate authors of evil and of good; they judged of their power, by comparing the degrees of prosperity their worshippers enjoyed. Was one nation or family more successful than another, their guardian gods were adopted by their rivals; and every day extended more widely this intercommunity of folly and of blasphemy.

Connected with this worship was the opinion of the power of magic *, or the arts to which the priests pretended, of discovering and even directing the effects ascribed to the operations of the elements †, the conjunctions of the stars, the influence of lucky and unlucky days, the power of invisible spirits, and the rabble of their idol gods. Connected with idolatry also was the trade of oracles and augurs, of diviners and soothsayers; to whom the dupes of heathen priestcraft resorted, to calm their fears of futurity, and direct their conduct in every enterprise of doubt or hazard; while the babble of wretches distracted with fanaticism, or convulsed with intoxicating vapours, the flight and chattering of birds, the recollection of fleeting dreams, the inspection

* Vide, for a full account of this subject, Banier's History of Mythology, Lib. IV.; and on the whole of this subject of idolatry, Leland's very useful work on the Advantage and Necessity of Revelation, Part I. ch. iii. iv. v. vi. vii.

† Vide Stanleii Historia Philosophiæ Orientalis, cum notis Clerici, Lib. I. ch. xvi. xvii.; and from ch. xxiii. to the end of the first Book.

inspection of entrails, and a thousand other modes equally capricious and absurd, were used by impostors, to blind and cheat their followers.

Thus impious and absurd was the whole system of idolatry; yet was it so extensive and deeply rooted, as to seem utterly incapable of being checked or reformed by any of the ordinary dispensations of Providence. There is reason to believe, that before the dispersion of mankind, a great part of them had apostatized from the worship of the one true God, and, struck perhaps with the influence of the air and of the winds, in remedying the effects of the deluge, had commenced the structure of the tower of Babel; not with the wild conceit of raising it till its top should reach to heaven, but that its top should be sacred to the heavens*, the common temple of worship, and centre of their idolatrous union; and it is probable that their dispersion was designed to defeat this impious design, by confounding not only their languages, but still more their idolatrous creed, and rendering their universal combination in this base apostasy impracticable and transient. But however this may be, it is certain that in the five centuries which elapsed from the birth of Abraham, to the mission of Moses, idolatry had infected every part of the world, of which any records can be traced: it had been carried to the fullest

* Vide Hutchinson's Works, i. 28. or the Abridgment of them by Duncan Forbes, in a Letter to a Bishop, p. 30 of his Works.

fullest extent of mischievous and absurd impiety by the Egyptians, the wisest and most celebrated nation of the then civilized globe: it had totally corrupted the Assyrians, and above all the Canaanites, who were the most warlike nations of the earth; as well as the Phœnicians, who conducted the commerce of the world, and who diffused it wherever they extended their traffic, or planted their colonies.

Unhappily indeed experience proves, that the progress of reason and science has ever been totally ineffectual in checking the progress of idolatry. The order and beauty of the heavens; the grateful vicissitudes of days and nights, and seasons; the fertility of the earth; all these, the more they were contemplated, instead of raising men's thoughts to the great first Cause, only riveted more deeply the admiration and the idolatry which were paid to the host of heaven, and the elements of nature*. The ordinary judgments of God, famine and earthquake, sword and pestilence, were ascribed to the influence of the invisible and malignant powers and spirits, whom fear had created, and superstition adored. Pride and policy, gratitude and affection, daily added to the number of deified men: the whole system of paganism was defended by kings and legislators, who employed it as an engine of government, and derived from it sacredness and dignity; as well as by priests and divines, who relied

* For a remarkable instance, vide Jer. xliv. 17.

relied on it for subsistence. While to the great mass of the people it presented temples and statues, pomps and festivals, to interest the imagination, and gratify the sense; it raised their curiosity, by the hope of prying into futurity; it employed the influence of magical arts and malignant powers, to work upon their fears; while it interested their private partialities and prejudices, by local, national, and even family gods. But above all, idolatry recommended itself to degraded and corrupted man, by indulging and almost consecrating every licentious passion and every vicious propensity of the human heart.

We have seen how man, who had been formed after the image of his Creator—man, who bore that sacred image stamped upon his soul in the bright characters of reason, truth and virtue—forgot that Creator, and, stooping from his high original, degraded that sacred image, by bowing down to his fellow-creature, and blasphemously deifying his fellow man. Thus reason and truth and virtue seemed to vanish from his nature; folly and error and vice to triumph in their stead. When men were exalted into gods, every the basest passion and the foulest vice found an example to justify, and a patron to protect it*. Gods, whose characters and

* Vide Lucian passim — Hesiod, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles passim—Ovid, Terence, &c. &c.—Cicero de Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. cap. xvi. Vide also Tertullian's Apology, ch. ii.

and actions had been impure, revengeful and cruel, were honoured by adopting, as parts of their worship, impurity, cruelty and bloodshed. Dæmons, who were worshipped not from love but fear, not because beneficent but malignant, it was naturally supposed could be appeased or conciliated, only by the suppliant inflicting sufferings and death, even on the object whom he held most dear. Hence "every "abomination to the Lord which he hateth did the "heathens do unto their gods:" so that "even "their sons and their daughters did they burn in "the fire to their gods*." In truth, we know from other sources than the Scripture, that theft, bloodshed and cruelty, that incest, adultery and unnatural crimes, were sanctioned by the example of the heathen gods, and even consecrated as parts of their worship:

ch. ii. 10. 15. Augustine de Civitate Dei passim. The Octavius of Minutius Felix, especially sect. xx. to xxx. And Leland's Advantage of Revel. ch. vii.—Cicero's words are worth transcribing: "Exposui pene non philosophorum judicia "sed delirantium somnia (speaking of the stoic's opinions) nec "enim multo absurdiora sunt quæ poetarum vocibus fusa, "ipsa suavitate nocuerunt; qui & ira inflammatos, & lubidine "furentes induxerunt deos; feceruntque ut eorum bella, pugnas, "prœlia, vulnera, videremus; odia præterea, dissidia, discor- "dias, ortus, interitus, querelas, lamentationes, effusas in omni "intemperantia libidines, adulteria, vincula, cum humano "genere concubitus, mortalesque ex immortali procreatos, "cum poetarum autem errore conjungere licet portenta mago- "rum, Ægyptiorumque in eodem genere dementiam, tum etiam "vulgi opiniones quæ in maxima inconstantia, veritatis igno- "rantia versantur." Yet Cicero was a *worshipper*, nay, a *priest*, of these very gods!!

* Deut. xii. 31.

worship: we know that every species of lewdness was practised in the temples of some, and that * human sacrifices bled upon the altars of others, and this in the most polished and celebrated nations of

* Vide supra note, page 193; also a full collection of testimonies to this fact, by my learned friend, Dr. Magee, in his very able work on Atonement and Sacrifice, notes, p. 90 to p. 102. When we reflect on the facts briefly but faithfully sketched here, and in the authorities referred to, what must we think of the understanding, or the moral and religious feelings, of those who, to discredit Revelation, panegyrize heathenism, under the pretext of its tolerance? Thus Mr. Gibbon, History of the Decline of the Roman Empire, Vol. I. ch. ii. sect. 1. confesses indeed, that not only "every virtue, but *even vice* "acquired its divine representation; that the philosopher could "not adore as gods those imperfect beings whom he must have "despised as men." Yet he speaks with evident approbation of these philosophers, "who, viewing with a smile of pity and "indulgence the various errors of the vulgar, diligently prac-"tised the ceremonies of their fathers; devoutly frequented the "temples of the gods, and, sometimes condescending to act a "part on the theatre of superstition, concealed the sentiments "of an atheist under sacerdotal robes:" and tells us, "That "the emperors, who always exercised the office of supreme "pontiff, were convinced that the various modes of worship "contributed alike to the *same salutary purposes*; and that in "every country the form of superstition which had received "the sanction of time and experience was the *best adapted to* "*the climate and its inhabitants.*" The same Mr. Gibbon tells us of the "mild spirit of antiquity, less attentive to the dif-"ference than to the resemblance of their religious worship:" of the "elegant mythology of Homer [see it described by "Cicero, in the last note,] which gave a beautiful and almost a "regular form to the polytheism of the ancient world:" of "the "public festivals which *humanized the manners* of the people," (probably by accustoming them to obscene rites, or gladiatorial combats;)

of antiquity; amongst the Egyptians and Assyrians, the Canaanites and Phœnicians, and from them were these abominations transferred to Greece, and Carthage and Rome.

Thus

combats;) and of "the arts of divination, managed as a convenient instrument of policy." Of the same system of polytheism, Mr. Hume* tells us in his Natural History of Religion, sect. xi. "That if we examine without prejudice, the ancient heathen mythology, as contained in the poets, we shall not discover in it any such monstrous absurdity as we may at first be apt to apprehend. Where is the difficulty" (asks this cautious investigator of probabilities) "in conceiving that the same powers or principles, *whatever they were*, which formed this visible world, men and animals, produced also a species of intelligent creatures of more refined substance and greater authority than the rest? That these creatures may be capricious, revengeful, passionate, voluptuous, is easily conceived; nor is any circumstance more apt among ourselves to engender such vices, than the license of absolute authority. And in short" (concludes this cautious academic investigator of truth) "the whole mythological system is so natural, that in the variety of planets and worlds contained in this universe, it seems *more than probable*, that somewhere or other it is really carried into execution. The chief objection to it with regard to this planet is, that it is not ascertained by any just reason or authority. The ancient tradition insisted upon by heathen priests and theologers, is but a weak foundation, and transmitted also with such a number of contradictory reports, supported all of them by equal authority, that it became absolutely impossible to fix a preference among them. A few volumes, therefore, must contain all the polemical writings of Pagan priests; and their whole theology must consist more of traditional stories and superstitious practices, than of philosophical argument and controversy." This want of philosophical argument and controversy, to help out the ancient mythologists,

* Vide Hume's Essays, Vol. II. p. 442.

Thus foul and odious was the nature, thus wide the diffusion, and thus fatal the effects, of that idolatry; to provide an antidote to which in the Jewish nation, a special divine interposition was employed. Former interpositions had been tried in vain;

mythologists, and remove the objection against admitting the poetic polytheism of the heathens in this our planet, must have been a disadvantage not a little to be lamented in the judgment of our philosopher, for he had told us in the preceding page, "That where the Deity is represented as infinitely superior to "mankind; this belief, though altogether just, when joined "with superstitious terrors, is apt to sink the human mind in "the lowest submission and abasement, and to represent the "monkish virtues of mortification, penance, humility and pas-"sive suffering, as the only qualities which are acceptable to "him. But where the gods are conceived to be only a little "superior to mankind, and to have been many of them advanced "from that inferior rank, we are more at our ease in our "addresses to them, and may even without profaneness aspire "sometimes to a rivalship and emulation of them: hence "activity, spirit, courage, magnanimity, love of liberty, and "all the virtues which aggrandize a people." Alas! how lamentable the departure from so happy a state of things! To bring it back, would be the triumph of *modern philosophy*.

Let us hear another *minute philosopher*, the Abbé Reynal, mourning over the ill-fated virtues of expiring polytheism, and indignant at the edict of Constantine, which prohibited Paganism in the entire extent of his empire. How destructive the consequence! I copy the words of the eloquent Abbé, Histoire Philosophique, Introduction, page 10. "Ces vastes "contrees se trouverent couvertes d' hommes, qui n'etoient "plus lies entr'eux ni à l'etat, par les nœuds sacres de la reli-"gion & du serment; sans prêtres, sans temples, sans *morale* "*publique*, quel zele pouvoient-ils avoir pour repousser des "ennemis, qui venoient attaquer une domination á laquelle "ils

vain; the deluge, the dispersion of mankind, the divine communication to Noah, and we have reason to believe, to other patriarchs, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, had been ineffectual. Idolatry extended, till there was scarce any apparent mode of preventing its involving all mankind in guilt and profligacy, effacing every trace of primæval piety, as well as of moral virtue, from the earth. So that if at any time the Deity should communicate a new revelation of his will to men, they would be totally unprepared to estimate the truth of its principles, and the weight of its evidence, in order to convince themselves of its divine original. If at any time the imposture and falsehood of heathen priests and oracles, and the vanity of idols, should be detected; there yet would have existed no system of true religion in the world, whence good principles and a pure worship could be restored.

To prevent an apostasy so fatal and irremediable, the moral Governor of the world determined to select

"ils ne tenoient plus." The public morals of Paganism lost, all was lost.

From this it seems pretty clear, that if idolatry had continued in this country to this hour, these philosophers would, to use the words of Mr. Gibbon, "have condescended to act their "part on the theatre of superstition, that the interests of the "priests, and the superstition of the people, might be suffi-"ciently respected." When such representations are disseminated by writers so eloquent and admired, I trust I shall be excused for having dwelt somewhat at length on the absurdity, impiety, and atrocious crimes attendant on idolatry; which, it appears (particularly from their writings,) nothing but Revelation could have checked.

select one nation, amongst whom to cultivate the principles of true religion and consistent virtue. For this purpose Moses relates, that God selected Abraham *, a man of distinguished virtue and piety: he tried his faith and obedience in various ways, commanding him to quit his country and his kindred, and go into a strange land, which he promised to give unto his seed: he enters into a national covenant with him, that he and his posterity should serve the one true God alone, and God promised on his part "THAT THROUGH HIS SEED, "ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH SHOULD BE "BLESSED:" that so long as his descendants preserved their obedience, God would multiply them, and bless them with the possession of the land of Canaan, and every species of temporal prosperity. As the seal and record of this covenant, God prescribed circumcision to the Jews, which effectually distinguished and separated them from every other people.

Before this divine promise could be carried into full effect, it was necessary this family should multiply into a nation. The time for this, after which they were to take possession of the promised land, is fixed at the original formation of the compact; "Know of a surety (says God to Abra-"ham) that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land "which

* Vide Genesis, xii. three first verses; ch. xiii. from ver. 14.; and ch. xv. xvii. & xxii.

which is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them for four hundred years. "And also that nation whom they shall serve, will "I judge: and after that they shall come out with "great substance*."

At the close of the appointed period, Moses was raised up to accomplish the promised deliverance of this chosen nation from their land of bondage; to inflict the judgments God had menaced on the idolaters who had so long oppressed them; to lead the chosen people to the land of their inheritance; and to convey to them, from God himself, such a system of religious and civil government, as was suited to their situation, and to those designs for the accomplishment of which the Divine Wisdom had selected and preserved them: even to erect in the midst of this nation the standard of the one true God, in opposition to idolatry; to exhibit them as an example of divine providence, continually superintending their conduct, rewarding their adherence to piety and virtue, and punishing their deviations into idolatry and vice; and finally to employ them, in order to prepare the way for the introduction of that blessing, which it was promised should be conveyed through them to all the nations of the earth; even the PROMISED SAVIOUR, CHRIST JESUS; who at the appointed time appeared, to instruct, to reform, and to redeem all who would return and repent; to break down the wall of partition

* Genesis, xv. 13.

tition between the Jews and the Gentiles; to call all nations into one fold, under one shepherd, and turn men every where "from the works of darkness "unto light, and from the power of Satan unto "God*."

Such were some of the chief purposes for which the Jewish race was selected, and the Mosaic law promulgated; but in executing this purpose, it was necessary, according to the universal system of God's moral government, to treat the individuals who were to be employed in accomplishing it, as moral agents. In no instance does the Divinity control the actions of human beings by mere physical violence and compulsory restraint: in no instance are men's moral characters wholly neglected and set aside, so as to compel them to sustain a part contrary to the dictates of their judgments, and the feelings of their hearts. No: when the God of nature interferes to direct the conduct of these creatures, whom he has formed with reason to judge and freedom to act for themselves, and whom he has made responsible for the application of that reason, and the exercise of that free will, he employs means adapted to that moral nature he has himself bestowed: these means have for their immediate object, either to enlighten the understanding by instruction suited to the purposes of the divine œconomy, or to bias the will by such motives, and work on the affections by such instruments and influences,

* Acts, xxvi. 18.

influences, as are adapted to the general character and situation of the agent, as well as to the particular mode of conduct they tend to produce; and to communicate such strength and aid, as, without disturbing the progress or subverting the principles of moral agency, may yet prevent men from being tempted above their power, but with the "temptation may make them a way to escape, that they "may be able to bear it *."

If therefore we wish to estimate the authority of any supposed revelation, from its internal evidence, we are led to consider the nature as well of the instructions it conveys, as of the motives by which it engages the affections and influences the will; and to compare both with the situation and character of the moral agents to whom these instructions and motives are addressed. Let us apply these principles of enquiry to the Mosaic code, and first consider the purport of these instructions which it addressed to the Jewish people, on the existence and attributes of God, and how far it adapted these instructions to the character and circumstances of the peculiar people for whom they were designed.

If then we examine the Jewish Law, to discover the principle on which the whole system depends, the primary truth, to inculcate and illustrate which is its leading object, we find it to be, that great basis of all religion, both natural and revealed, the self-existence,

* 1 Cor. x. 13.

existence, essential unity, perfections and providence, of the supreme Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth. The first line of the Mosaic writings inculcates this great truth: "In the beginning God "created the heaven and the earth." When the Lawgiver begins to recapitulate the statutes and judgments he had enjoined to his nation, it is with this declaration, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our "God is one Lord*;" or, as it might be more closely expressed, Jehovah our Elohim, or God, is one Jehovah. And at the commencement of that sublime hymn, delivered immediately before his death, in which this illustrious prophet sums up the doctrines he had taught, the wonders by which they had been confirmed, and the denunciations by which they were enforced, he declares this great tenet with the sublimity of eastern poetry, but at the same time with the precision of philosophic truth:— "Give ear," says he, "O ye heavens, and I will "speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my "mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain: my "speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain "upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon "the grass†." What, is that doctrine so awful, that the whole universe is thus invoked to attend to it? So salutary, as to be compared with the principle, whose operation diffuses beauty and fertility over the vegetable world? Hear the answer: "Be- "cause I will publish the name of Jehovah; "ascribe

* Deut. vi. 4. † Ibid. xxxii. 1, &c.

"ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the "Rock, his work is perfect: a God of truth, and "without iniquity, just and right is he."

This then is one great leading doctrine of the Jewish code. But the manner in which this doctrine is taught, displays such wise accommodation to the capacity and character of the nation to whom it is addressed, as deserves to be carefully remarked. That character by which the Supreme Being is most clearly distinguished from every other, however exalted; that character, from which the acutest reasoners * have endeavoured demonstratively to deduce, as from their source, all the divine attributes, is SELF-EXISTENCE. Is it not then highly remarkable, that it is under this character the Divinity is described on his first manifestation to the Jewish Lawgiver? The Deity at first reveals himself

* Vide Dr. Clarke on the Attributes; Wollaston's Religion of Nature, sect. v.; Bishop Gastrell Boyle's Lectures, sub initio. And particularly, vide Dr. Hugh Hamilton (once a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and late Bishop of Ossory,) On the Being and Attributes of God. I gladly embrace this opportunity of paying my humble tribute of respect to the memory of a man, who applied the most powerful talents to the most useful purposes; equally eminent in mathematical and theological learning (for he was the author of a Treatise on Conic Sections, one of the most original and beautiful specimens of pure geometrical reasoning ever exhibited, and as such generally adopted.) Highly respectable also for his private virtue, he will ever rank as a most distinguished ornament of the University of Dublin, and the church of Ireland. And as his life was estimable, so its close was enviable; he died full of years and of honours, encircled by a virtuous and respectable family, trained by his precepts to emulate his example.

himself unto him as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; and therefore the peculiar, national, and guardian God of the Jewish race. Moses, conscious of the degeneracy of the Israelites, their ignorance of, or their inattention to the true God, and the difficulty and danger of any attempt to recal them to his exclusive worship, and to withdraw them from Egypt, seems to decline the task; but, when absolutely commanded to undertake it, he said unto God, "Behold, when I come unto the "Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The "God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and "they shall say to me, What is his name? What "shall I say unto them? And God said unto "Moses, *I am that I am:* and he said, Thus shalt "thou say unto the Children of Israel, *I am* hath "sent me unto you *." Here we observe, according to the constant method of the divine wisdom, when it condescends to the prejudices of men, how in the very instance of indulgence it corrects their superstition. The religion of names arose from an idolatrous polytheism †; and the name given here directly opposes this error, and in the ignorance of that dark and corrupted period establishes clearly that great truth, to which the most enlightened philosophy can add no new lustre, and on which all the most refined speculations on the divine nature ultimately rest, the SELF-EXISTENCE, and, by

* Exod. iii. 13 & 14.

† Vide Warburton's Divine Legat. B. IV. sect. vi. sub initio.

by consequence, the eternity and immutability, of the one great Jehovah.

If we adopt the opinion of those interpreters*, who discover in this passage, not only a declaration of the self-existence and immutability of the Deity, but an intimation of that great Deliverer, "who "was, and is, and is to come," "the same yester-"day, to-day, and for ever;" the indication of a truth so certain, and yet to mere human imagination so unthought of at that early period, would confirm, beyond possibility of doubt, the original of a declaration, which divine wisdom alone could promulgate, and divine power alone could fulfil.

The progress of this interesting narrative supplies new proofs of the wisdom with which this revelation was adapted to the nation to whom it was addressed, and the purposes for which it was designed. Immediately after the command, "Thus shalt thou "say unto the Children of Israel, *I am* hath sent "me unto you," it is added †, "And God said "moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto "the Children of Israel, The Lord God of your "fathers," (or rather, Jehovah the God of your fathers) "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, "and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial "unto all generations." Does not this passage clearly

* Vide Houbigant on Exod. iii. 14.; Parkhurst's Lexicon, on the words יהוה and יה and Bibliotheca Biblica in locum. Compare John viii. 58. and Revel. i. 4. and iv. 8.

† Exod. iii. 15.

clearly intimate, that the peculiar and incommunicable character of the one true God, was self-existence, that he was the great I AM; yet that this abstract and philosophic description of the Supreme Being was not sufficiently calculated to arrest the attention, conciliate the confidence, and command the obedience, of a people entirely unaccustomed to scientific speculations, and incapable of being influenced by any other than temporal motives; and that it was therefore necessary to represent to them the Supreme Governor of the universe in a more circumscribed and attractive form, as the God of their fathers, who had conferred the most distinguished favours on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to whom their posterity might, from the full assurance which fact and experience supply, look up with confidence, as their peculiar guardian God; and in the religion framed for them, recognize a system clearly and certainly exalting them above all idolatrous nations, who hoped to derive prosperity from the protection of their peculiar tutelary gods?

This necessity of accommodating the religious instructions communicated to the Jews to their capacity and feelings, should never be forgotten, when we consider the meaning and objects of these instructions. If they are really of divine original, it may be required, that they should certainly be in no instance inconsistent with the more complete discoveries of religious truth, which subsequent researches

researches and subsequent revelations supply; and perhaps it might be expected that they should (as in this instance is evident) contain such intimations of these truths, as would to future ages prove the divine wisdom, which so far developed them. But we are not, surely, to wonder that doctrines of more immediate necessity, and more powerful influence, should be more frequently insisted on: we are not to wonder that the self-existence of the Deity should be rarely dwelt on; his character as God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, perpetually brought forward: we are not to wonder that the attributes and the conduct of the Divinity should be described in language, and illustrated by metaphors, derived from the human character, and even from human passions: we are not to wonder that immediate and temporal sanctions should be preferred to spiritual and remote; and in general we may expect, that the language and manner in which religious truths are inculcated, should be adapted to the gross imaginations and short-sighted views of the people for whom they were designed.

But though the SELF-EXISTENCE of the Deity was a fact too abstract to require its being frequently inculcated; his ESSENTIAL UNITY was a practical principle, the sure foundation on which to erect the structure of true religion, and form a barrier against the encroachments of idolatry. For this commenced not so frequently in denying the existence, or even the supremacy of the one true God, as in associating

with

with him for objects of adoration, inferior intermediate beings, who were supposed to be more directly employed in the administration of human affairs. To confute and resist this false principle was, therefore, one great object of the Jewish scheme. Hence the unity of God is inculcated with perpetual solicitude; it stands at the head of the system of moral Law promulgated to the Jews from Sinai by the divine voice, heard by the assembled nation, and issuing from the divine glory, with every circumstance which could impress the deepest awe upon even the dullest minds. "I am the Lord thy God, "which have brought thee out of the land of "Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt "have no other gods beside me*." And in the recapitulation of the divine Laws in Deuteronomy, it is repeatedly enforced with the most solemn earnestness: "Hear, O Israel, The Lord "our God is one Lord;" and again, "Unto thee "it was shewed, that thou mightest know that "the Lord he is God; there is none else beside "him. Know therefore this day, and consider it "in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven "above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none "else†."

This SELF-EXISTENT, SUPREME and ONLY GOD is, moreover, described as possessed of EVERY PERFECTION which can be ascribed to the Divinity. "Ye

* Exod. xx. 2 & 3. † Deut. iv. 35 & 39. and vi. 4.

"Ye shall be holy" (says the Lord to the people of the Jews;) "for I the Lord your God am "holy. Ascribe ye," says the legislator, "greatness "unto our God; he is the Rock, his work is "perfect; a God of truth, and without iniquity, "just and right is he *." And in the hymn of joy and thanksgiving on the miraculous escape of the Israelites at the Red Sea, this is its burthen: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the "gods? who is like unto thee, glorious in holi-"ness, fearful in praises, doing wonders †?" And when the Lord delivered to Moses the two tables of the moral Law, he is described as descending in the cloud, and proclaiming the name of the Lord: "And the Lord passed by before him, and pro-"claimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and "gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, "transgression and sin, and that will by no means "clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the "fathers upon the children, and upon the children's "children, unto the third and to the fourth genera-"tion ‡." Thus, while one character is ascribed to the Deity, which is peculiarly connected with the particular scheme of moral government exercised by Divine Providence over the Jews, that of visiting the iniquities and the virtues of the parents upon the children; at the same time every virtue is ascribed to

* Lev. xix. 2. Deut. xxxii. 3. † Exod. xv. 11.
‡ Exod. xxxiv. 6 & 7.

to Him, which the most exalted benevolence can desire, or the most refined philosophy conceive.

But to teach the self-existence, the unity, the wisdom and the power, of the Deity; nay, even his moral perfections of mercy, justice and truth; would have been insufficient to arrest the attention and command the obedience of a nation, the majority of which looked no farther than mere present objects, and at that early period cherished scarcely any hopes higher than those of a temporal kind—if, in addition to all this, care had not been taken to represent the PROVIDENCE of God as not only directing the government of the universe by general laws, but also perpetually superintending the conduct and determining the fortune of every nation, of every family, nay, of every individual. It was the disbelief or the neglect of this great truth, which gave spirit and energy, plausibility and attraction, to the whole system of idolatry. While men believed that the supreme God and Lord of all was too exalted in his dignity, too remote from this sublunary scene, to regard its vicissitudes with an attentive eye; and too constantly engaged * in the contemplation of his own perfections, and the enjoyment of his own independent and all-perfect happiness, to interfere in the regulation of human affairs; they regarded with indifference that supreme Divinity, who seemed to take no concern in their conduct,

* Vide Cicero de Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. cap. lxi. to the end.

conduct, and to interfere not as to their happiness. However exalted and perfect such a Being might appear to abstract speculation, he was to the generality of mankind as if he did not exist: as their happiness or misery were not supposed to be influenced by his power, they referred not their conduct to his direction. If he delegated to * inferior beings the regulation of this inferior world; if all its concerns were conducted by their immediate agency, and all its blessings or calamities distributed by their immediate determination; it seemed rational, and even necessary, to supplicate their favour and submit to their authority; and neither unwise nor unsafe to neglect that Being, who, though all-perfect and supreme, would on this supposition appear, with respect to mankind, altogether inoperative.

There are abundant proofs, how deeply these feelings and opinions were imbibed by the whole Jewish race; and how indispensably necessary it was, to counteract their influence. Some examples are necessary, and a few will be sufficient. When the patriarch Jacob, after being solemnly invested by Isaac, acting under the divine authority, with the blessing of Abraham, was honoured by a celestial vision †, to renew the same covenant with him personally, and repeat to him the divine promise, not only "that his seed should multiply as the dust "of

* Vide supra, p. 188, the note.
† Gen. xxviii. 12 to 15.

" of the earth, and should inherit the land in which " he slept, but that in him and his seed all the " nations of the earth should be blessed;" the patriarch awakes impressed with the deepest awe and reverence; he rears an altar, pours upon it a libation, and vows a vow; but such a vow, as proves that even here his imagination was occupied, not so much with the character of God as supreme governor of the world, not so much with any anxiety to secure the temporal but remote part of the promise which regarded his posterity, or the spiritual part which announced that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, as with that which promised immediate protection and prosperity to himself. "Jacob vowed a vow, saying, " If God will be with me, and will keep me in this " way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and " raiment to put on; so that I come again to my " father's house in peace; then shall Jehovah the " Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have " set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all " that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the " tenth unto thee *."

Further, as the expectation of temporal blessings was the most powerful motive to attach man to the worship of the true God; so was it the source of all idolatry to false divinities, through every period of the Jewish history. Hence, on the defeat of the Syrians

* Gen. xxviii. 20—22

Syrians by the Jews, "the servants of the king of "Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the "hills; therefore they were stronger than we: but "let us fight against them in the plain, and surely "we shall be stronger than they *." This then was the radical error on which idolatry was founded. To counteract it, the Jewish legislator uniformly represents the supreme Jehovah, as the sole distributor of every present good and evil, as perpetually watching the conduct of mankind, and regulating the whole series of their fortunes according to their merit or demerit; and states the Jewish people to be selected, that, by the plan of their religion, the constitution of their government, and the constant adjustment of their prosperity or adversity, to their fidelity towards Jehovah, and their obedience to his will, they might exhibit a decisive proof of his overruling providence in all human affairs †.

The

* 1 Kings, xx. 23.

† I have been much gratified at finding the idea here adduced, of one leading object of the Jewish Scheme, confirmed and very ingeniously illustrated by the late Rev. Newcome Cappe, a writer of considerable learning and talent, in his "Critical Remarks on Scripture," Vol. II. p. 195; in his *Idea of Judaism and its peculiar End and Object*;—viz. "to exhibit a "sensible specimen, by way of proof, of God's moral govern-"ment." On this he observes, that "the essential principle "of the Jewish œconomy was—that this people as a nation "should be secure and prosperous, while they obeyed the civil "and religious institutions of their country—endangered and "distressed, when they departed from them, or neglected "them." And he proceeds to remark, that "the Jews, in their "character and fate, and the correspondence of them to one "another,

The declarations of the Jewish Lawgiver on this topic are most full, especially in the book of Deuteronomy, in which he recapitulates the wonders of divine power in their behalf, which the Jews themselves

" another, might be an exhibition of the moral government of
" God, it was necessary that their Law and their circumstances
" should *appear* to be the work of God; that their obedience to
" God should be in such things as are *obvious and sensible*, in
" respect of which all men might judge of their character,
" whether it were correspondent to the Law or not; and that
" their circumstances, in like manner, and their correspondence
" to the respect they paid to the Law, should be obvious and
" observable."

In order that such a sensible specimen by way of proof should be given of God's moral government, he observes very truly, that " it was necessary,

" 1st, That it should not be in *individuals merely*, who could
" not be conspicuous or interesting enough to engage the atten-
" tion of mankind at large, or would, if extending to any great
" number, be too obscure, and require as great attention and
" discernment to perceive it as are necessary to collect the
" moral governments of God from the general laws of creation
" and providence.

" Nor, 2dly, in the world at large promiscuously; for the
" could not be well discerned, or form a striking object
" distinct observation.

" Nor, 3dly, in respect of moral virtue merely
" merit mankind cannot judge, the motives
" are not penetrable by human eyes, its
" uncertain and equivocal. But what
" certain mode of external conduct
" ship, for instance, this or
" ascertained; and such
" moral; yet, when
" sup
" the

themselves had witnessed; and is therefore able to impress the conviction of the divine providence from their own experience. It is however frequently inculcated on other occasions, as before the solemn publication of the ten commandments, God by Moses addresses the Children of Israel: "Ye have "seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I "bore you on eagles wings, and brought you unto "myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my "voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you "shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all "people: for all the earth is mine*."

Most remarkable is the declaration in the solemn hymn which closes the writings of the illustrious Lawgiver: "Remember," says he, addressing the assembled

* therefore, of such a Law, is an argument and exhibition of "the moral government of God.

"In the 4th place," Mr. Cappe observes, "the remunera- "tion must be sensible and obvious, like the conduct which is "its object; it must not therefore consist in any thing merely "internal, as in mental joys and hopes,—or regrets and fears." Therefore, I *add*, not in the hopes or fears of a future life, principally.

e avoid expressing my regret, that these two ppe's do not contain more of his reasonings ce of Christianity, or of those beautiful tracts from which his ingenious and interesting account of his life, scussions and criticisms, in to Socinianism, it must that v em-

assembled nation, "remember the days of old, "consider the years of many generations: ask thy "father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and "they will tell thee. When the Most High divided "to the nations their inheritance, when he separated "the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the "people according to the number of the Children "of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; "Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found "him in a desert land, and in the waste-howling "wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, "he kept him as the apple of his eye*." And this sublime hymn closes with the following awful declaration, on the subject of which we now treat. When foreseeing the apostasy of the Jews, in turning to false gods, and denouncing the punishments which should in consequence be inflicted upon them, he describes the Deity as expostulating with his wayward people: "Where are their gods, "the rock in which they trusted, which did eat the "fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their "drink-offerings? let them rise up and [illegible] "and be your protection. See now that [illegible] "he, and there is no god with me; I [illegible] "alive. I wound, and I heal: [illegible] "that can deliver out of my [illegible] "hand to heaven, and [illegible]

In truth, this [illegible] God

inseparably connected with every motive which is offered to sway the conduct of the Jews, and forcibly inculcated by every event of their history. This had been manifested in the appointment of the land of Canaan for the future settlement of the chosen people, on the first covenant which God entered into with the patriarch Abraham: in the prophecy, that for four hundred years they should be afflicted in Egypt, and afterwards be thence delivered; in the increase of their nation, under circumstances of extreme oppression, and their supernatural deliverance from that oppression. The same Providence was displayed in the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea; the travels of the thousands of Israel through the wilderness, sustained by food from heaven; and in their subsequent settlement in the promised land, by means entirely distinct from their own strength.

Reliance on the same Providence was the foundation of their civil government, the spirit and the principle of their constitution. On this only could [illegible] commanded to keep the sabbatic year, [illegible]g their land, or even gathering its [illegible]roduce; confiding in the divine [illegible]od would send his "blessing on [illegible]that it should bring forth fruit [illegible]he same faith in Divine [illegible]on them to leave [illegible]ttack [illegible]of

of their surrounding enemies; while all the males of the nation assembled at Jerusalem, to celebrate the three great festivals, enjoined by divine command, with the assurance, that "no man should "desire their land, when they went up to appear "before the Lord their God thrice in the "year *." And finally, it is most evident, that, contrary to all other lawgivers, the Jewish legislator renders his civil institutions entirely subordinate to his religious; and announces to his nation, that their temporal adversity or prosperity would entirely depend—not on their observance of their political regulations, not on their preserving a military spirit, or acquiring commercial wealth, or strengthening themselves by powerful alliances—but on their continuing to worship the one true God, according to the religious rites and ceremonies by him prescribed, and preserving their piety and morals untainted by the corruptions and vices which idolatry tended to introduce. How clear and impressive are the concluding words of the last exhortation of their illustrious Lawgiver, to the assembled nation: "See," says he, "I have set "before thee this day life and good, death and evil; "in that I command thee this day to love the Lord "thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his "commandments, and his statutes, and his judg-"ments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and "the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land "whither

* Exod. xxxiv. 24.

"whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine "heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but "shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, "and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, "that ye shall surely perish, and that you shall not "prolong your days upon the land whither thou "passest over Jordan to possess it. I call heaven "and earth to witness against you this day, that I "have set before thee life and death, blessing and "cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and "thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the "Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his "voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, (for "he is thy life and the length of thy days) that thou "mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware "unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to "Jacob, to give them *."

Such was the theology of the Jewish religion, at a period when the whole world was deeply infected with idolatry; when all knowledge of the one true God, all reverence for his sacred name, all reliance on his providence, all obedience to his laws, were nearly banished from the earth; when the severest chastisements had been tried in vain; when no hope of reformation appeared from the refinements of civilization or the researches of philosophy, for the most civilized and enlightened nations adopted with the greatest greediness, and disseminated with the greatest activity, the absurdities, impieties and pollutions

* Deut. xxx. 15, &c.

pollutions of idolatry. Then was the Jewish Law promulgated to a nation, who, to mere human judgment, might have appeared incapable of inventing or receiving such a high degree of intellectual or moral improvement; for they had been long enslaved to the Egyptians, the authors and supporters of the grossest idolatry; they had been weighed down by the severest bondage, perpetually harassed by the most incessant manual labours; for the Egyptians "made their lives bitter with hard "bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all "manner of service in the field *." At this time, and in this nation, was the Mosaic Law promulgated, teaching the great principles of true religion, the self-existence, the unity, the perfections and the providence, of the one great Jehovah; reprobating all false gods, all image worship, all the absurdities and profanations of idolatry. At this time, and in this nation, was a system of government framed, which had for its basis the reception of and steady adherence to this system of true religion; and establishing many regulations, which would be in the highest degree irrational, and could never hope to be received, except from a general and thorough reliance on the superintendence of Divine Providence, controlling the course of nature, and directing every event, so as to proportion the prosperity of the Hebrew people, according to their obedience to that Law which they received as divine.

In

* Exod. i. 14.

In the mode in which the doctrines of their religion were promulgated, we find a minute attention to the moral and intellectual character of the nation for whom it was designed, and the most admirable precautions used, to impress attention and command obedience, if the authority of the Lawgiver was in reality divine; but precautions of such a nature as would render his whole scheme abortive, and expose it to derision and contempt, if he had contrived it only by human artifice, and relied on nothing but human aid.

Here, then, I rest the first presumptive argument for the divine original of the Jewish scheme. And I contend, that the promulgation of such a system of theology, at such a period, and to such a people, so connected with the form of its government, and adopting such extraordinary regulations and precautions, cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, without allowing the truth of the Mosaic history, the deliverance of Israel by supernatural aid, and the establishment of their religion and government by divine authority.

PART II.

LECTURE II.

MORAL PRINCIPLES OF THE JEWISH LAW.

LECTURE II.

THE Ten Commandments due to the Mosaic Law—Their extent—Their importance illustrated by the practices of the heathen world—The Jewish religion inculcates the two great principles, of love to God, and love to man—Also love to our enemies, as far as was practicable under the Jewish œconomy—It did not substitute outward observances for internal piety—Proved from the general principles of internal religion, which it establishes—From the conditions on which alone it proposes the forgiveness of transgressions—From the connexion it points out, between the ceremonies of the ritual and internal religion—Recapitulation.

PART II.

LECT. II.

MORAL PRINCIPLES OF THE JEWISH LAW.

DEUTERONOMY, iv. 8.

" WHAT nation is there so great, that hath statutes and " judgments so righteous, as all this Law which I set before " you this day?"

IT shall be the object of this Lecture to enquire, how far this character, which the Jewish Legislator ascribes to his Law, is justified by the nature of the general moral principles which it inculcates, and the specific precepts it lays down, compared with the period at which they were promulgated, and the disposition and capacity of the nation for whom they were designed. In the first place, then, it is an obvious, but it is not therefore a less important remark, that to the Jewish religion we owe that admirable summary of moral duty, contained in the Ten Commandments. All fair reasoners will admit, that each of these must be understood to condemn, not merely the extreme

crime which it expressly prohibits, but every inferior offence of the same kind, and every mode of conduct leading to such transgression *; and, on the contrary, to enjoin opposite conduct, and the cultivation of opposite

* That the Ten Commandments were understood in this extensive sense by the Jews themselves, is evident, not only from the various declarations of the inspired Psalmist and the Prophets, but from the testimonies of such Jewish writings as have reached us, particularly those of Josephus and the celebrated Philo. I refer in particular to the following passages: —Psalms, iv. xv. & xix. 12, 13.; Psalm x. 16, to the end, particularly 23.; Psalm lxxxii. 2, 3, 4.; Psalms, ci. and cxix. passim, particularly 151, 163, 172.; Isaiah, i. from 10 to 20; also lvi. lviii. lxi.; Jeremiah, vii. sixteen first verses. All these passages shew clearly, that sincere and heartfelt piety and virtue, not Pharisaical strictness or mere ceremonial worship, was demanded by the Jewish Law.

In confirmation, consult Josephus, Book II. against Apion, from sect. xvi. to the end. The following beautiful and important passage is very full and express: "The reason," says he, "why the constitution of this legislation was ever better "directed to the utility of all, than other legislations were, is "this; that Moses did not make religion a part of virtue, "but he saw and he ordained other virtues to be part of reli-"gion: I mean justice, and fortitude, and temperance, and "an universal agreement of the members of the community "with one another; for all our actions and studies, and all our "words, (in Moses's settlement) have a reference to piety to-"wards God." And again, sect. xxiii. "What are the things "then that we are commanded or forbidden? They are simple, "and easily known. The first command is concerning God, "and affirms that God contains all things, and is a Being every "way perfect and happy, self-sufficient, and supplying all other "beings; the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things. "He is manifest in his works and benefits, and more conspi-"cuous than any other Being whatsoever. But as to his form "and magnitude, he is most obscure; all materials, however "costly,

opposite dispositions. Thus, the command, "Thou "shalt not kill," condemns not merely the single crime of deliberate murder; but every kind of violence, and every indulgence of passion and resentment

"costly, are unworthy to compose an image for him; and all "arts are unartful, to express the notion we ought to have of "him: we can neither see nor think of any thing like him, "nor is it agreeable to piety to form a resemblance of him. "We see his works—the light, the heaven, the earth, the sun "and the moon, the waters, the generations of animals, the "productions of fruits: these things hath God made, not with "hands, not with labour, nor as wanting the assistance of "any to co-operate with him; but as his will resolved they "should be made, and be good also, they were made and be-"came good immediately. All men ought to follow this Being, "and to worship him in the exercise of virtue; for this way of "the worship of God is the most holy of all others." In explaining the other principles of moral duty, he combines the direct commands of the Decalogue with their various additions, explanations and improvements, which are dispersed through the entire Pentateuch; thus applying them in the most extensive latitude.

The view which Philo takes of this subject, in his Tract on the Decalogue, and the two subsequent Tracts on the special Laws connected with the different parts of it, is equally extended. He says, "The commands which God himself pro-"claimed, are not only Laws, but the summaries or general "heads of particular Laws; and those which he promulgated "by his prophet Moses, are all to be referred to the former *." On the first and second commandment †, he argues at large against the absurdity and guilt of idolatry in all its points; on the third, ‡ he impresses with the greatest earnestness, the guilt either of perjury or rash swearing in conversation: "He

* Vide Philonis Opera, p. 576, Letter c.
† Ibid. from p. 579, Letter f, to 583, Letter e.
‡ Philo, p. 583, Letter f, and 584, Letter c.

resentment which tends either to excite such violence, or to produce that malignant disposition of mind, in which the guilt of murder principally consists: and similarly of the rest. In this extensive interpretation of the Commandments, we are warranted, not merely by the deductions of reason, but by the letter of the Law itself. For the addition of the *last*, "Thou shalt not covet," proves clearly that in

"who is about to swear," says he, "ought diligently to exa-
"mine all the circumstances attending the subject, about which
"he is to swear; whether it be important, whether it be true,
"whether it be certainly apprehended by him. Next he ought
"to consider himself, whether his soul is pure from guilt, his
"body from pollution, his tongue from evil-speaking; for it is
"criminal to permit any thing unworthy to be uttered by that
"mouth, which pronounces the most holy name." Considering the Ten Commandments as summaries of general Laws, he observes*, that "To the fourth is to be referred every thing
"relating to festival days and sabbaths, vows, sacrifices, puri-
"fications, and every other part of religious worship." On the fifth he observes, "That in the precept, 'Honour your
"parents,' are included many Laws, prescribing the duties of
"the young to the old, of subjects to magistrates, and servants
"to masters, and those who have received benefits to their
"benefactors." And thus of the rest.

I have made these quotations, to prove that the Mosaic Law effected the purposes which I have contended it was calculated to promote; by rectifying and enlarging the moral views of the reflecting and enlightened part of the Jewish nation, to a degree far superior to that which Pagan morality had attained; a circumstance particularly remarkable, in the extent which Philo (p. 592, Letter *f*,) gives to the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," as prohibiting any irregular desire and licentious indulgence. A strictness utterly unknown to the heathen world.

* Philonis Opera, p. 592, from Letter *f*, to the end of the Tract on the Decalogue.

in *all*, the disposition of the heart, as much as the immediate outward act, is the object of the divine Legislator; and thus it forms a comment on the meaning, as well as a guard for the observance, of all the preceding commands.

Interpreted in this natural and rational latitude, how comprehensive and important is this summary of moral duty! It inculcates the adoration of the one true God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; who must, therefore, be infinite in power, and wisdom and goodness; the object of exclusive adoration, of gratitude for every blessing we enjoy; of fear, for he is a jealous God; of hope, for he is merciful. It prohibits every species of idolatry; whether by associating false gods with the true, or worshipping the true by symbols and images. Commanding not to take the name of God in vain, it enjoins the observance of all outward respect for the divine authority, as well as the cultivation of inward sentiments and feelings, suited to this outward reverence: and it establishes the obligation of oaths, and, by consequence, of all compacts and deliberate promises; a principle, without which the administration of laws would be impracticable, and the bonds of society must be dissolved.

By commanding to keep holy the sabbath, as the memorial of the creation, it establishes the necessity of public worship, and of a stated and outward profession of the truths of religion, as well as of the

cultivation of suitable feelings: and it enforces this by a motive which is equally applicable to all mankind; and which should have taught the Jew, that he ought to consider all nations as equally creatures of that Jehovah whom he himself adored; equally subject to his government, and, if sincerely obedient, entitled to all the privileges his favour could bestow. It is also remarkable, that this commandment, requiring that the rest of the sabbath should include the man servant, and the maid servant, and the stranger that was within their gates, nay, even their cattle, proved that the Creator of the Universe extended his attention to all his creatures; that the humblest of mankind were the objects of his paternal love; that no accidental differences, which so often create alienation amongst different nations, would alienate any from the divine regard; and that even the brute creation shared the benevolence of their Creator, and ought to be treated by men with gentleness and humanity.

When we proceed to the second table, comprehending more expressly our social duties, we find all the most important principles on which they depend, clearly enforced. The commandment which enjoins "Honour thy father and mother," sanctions the principles, not merely of filial obedience, but of all those duties which arise from our domestic relations; and, while it requires not so much any one specific act, as the general disposition which should regulate our whole course of conduct in this instance,

instance, it impresses the important conviction, that the entire Law proceeds from a Legislator able to search and judge the heart of man.

The subsequent commands coincide with the clear dictates of reason, and prohibit crimes which human laws in general have prohibited as plainly destructive of social happiness. But it was of infinite importance to rest the prohibitions, "Thou shalt "not kill—Thou shalt not commit adultery—Thou "shalt not steal—Thou shalt not bear false wit-"ness," not merely on the deductions of reason, but also on the weight of a divine authority. How often have false ideas of public good in some places, depraved passions in others, and the delusions of idolatry in still more, established a law of reputation contrary to the dictates of reason and the real interests of society. In one country we see theft allowed, if perpetrated with address*; in others, piracy and rapine honoured †, if conducted with intrepidity. Sometimes we perceive adultery permitted ‡, the most unnatural crimes committed without remorse or shame §; nay, every species of impurity enjoined and consecrated, as a part of divine

* Vide Universal Hist. B. I. ch. xix. Vol. I. p. 564; and Plutarch in Lycurgus.

† Thucyd. Lib. I. sect. v.

‡ Universal Hist. Vol. I. 562; and Plutarch, in his Life of Lycurgus.

§ The proofs of this melancholy fact are unhappily too numerous. The second Eclogue of the correct Virgil is instar omnium.

divine worship. In others, we find revenge honoured as spirit—and death inflicted at its impulse, with ferocious triumph. Again, we see every feeling of nature outraged, and parents * exposing their helpless children to perish, for deformity of body or weakness of mind, or, what is still more dreadful, from mercenary or political views; and this inhuman practice familiarized by custom, and authorized by law. And, to close the horrid catalogue, we see false religions leading their deluded votaries to heap the altars of their idols with human victims †: the master butchers his slave, the conqueror his captive; nay, dreadful to relate, the parent sacrifices his children, and, while they shriek amidst the tortures of the flames, or in the agonies of death, he drowns their cries by the clangor of cymbals and the yells of fanaticism. Yet these abominations, separate or combined,

omnium. Vide also Plutarch in Lycurgus, compared with Xenophon's Vindication, acknowledging such guilt was authorized in many places, by the public Laws. Vide Leland's Advantage of Revelation, Part I. ch. vii. and Part II. ch. iii.

* Vide Plutarch in Lycurgus, who made it a Law, that the father was obliged to submit his child to the inspection of certain judges, to determine whether it should be preserved, or cast into a deep cavern to perish. Plutarch passes no censure on it. Vide also the Self-Tormentor of Terence, Act iii. scene 4. Plato and Aristotle approve this cruel violation of natural duty and affection. Vide Plato de Republica, Lib. V. pp. 25 & 28; and Aristotle Politic. Lib. VII. cap. xvi.; and Cicero de Legibus, Lib. III. cap. viii. by which it appears, this practice was enjoined by a law of the Twelve Tables at Rome.

† Vide the authorities quoted in the last Lecture, note, pp. 193, 194. & 195, &c.; and Dr. Ryan's useful Work on the Effects of Religion, Vol. I. p. 57, & seq.

combined, have disgraced ages and nations which we are accustomed to admire and celebrate as civilized and enlightened—Babylon and Egypt, Phœnicia and Carthage, Greece and Rome. Many of these crimes legislators have enjoined, or philosophers defended. What indeed could be hoped from legislators and philosophers, when we recollect the institutions of Lycurgus, especially as to purity of manners *, and the regulations of Plato on the same subject, in his model of a perfect republic; when we consider the sensuality of the Epicureans and immodesty of the Cynics; when we find suicide † applauded by the Stoics, and the murderous combats of gladiators defended by Cicero, and exhibited by Trajan? Such variation and inconstancy in the rule and practice of moral duty, as established by the feeble or fluctuating authority of human opinion, demonstrates the utility of a clear divine interposition, to impress these important prohibitions; and it is difficult for any sagacity to calculate, how far such an interposition was necessary,

* Vide Plutarch in Lycurgus; and Plato de Republica, Lib. V. This last exhibits the melancholy and humiliating spectacle, of the most enlightened of heathen philosophers coolly adopting, and recommending as the perfection of public morals, a system of more brutalizing turpitude and unnatural cruelty, than ever in fact disgraced human nature in its most depraved state, or polluted the pages of the most licentious writer. Vide Vol. VII. from p. 17 to 28, Editio Bipontina. Alas! how striking a proof of the importance of Revelation!

† Vide Cicero de Finibus, Lib. III. cap. xviii.; Leland, Part II. ch. xi.

necessary, and what effect it may have produced by influencing human opinions and regulating human conduct, when we recollect that the Mosaic code was probably the first written Law ever delivered to any nation; and that it must have been generally known in those eastern countries, from which the most ancient and celebrated legislators and sages derived the models of their Laws and the principles of their philosophy.

Such is the substance, and such the importance, of the Decalogue *. Shall we then censure and despise the Jewish Law, as a system of mere external and useless ceremonies; when it evidently places this great summary of moral duty at the head of all its institutions; and, in the very mode of its promulgation, stamps it with a sacredness and authority suited to its natural pre-eminence? For let it be remembered, that the Decalogue alone was promulgated to the Jews, not by the intermediate ministry of their legislator, but directly to the assembled nation by the voice of God, issuing from the glory on the top of Sinai. Thus does the Jewish legislator appeal to his nation in attestation of

* How strongly is this expressed in the language of some East Indians, to the English! "If you send us a missionary, send "us one who has learned your Ten Commandments." Vide Dr. Buchanan's Essay on the Establishment of an Episcopal Church in India, p. 61. a most interesting and important Work. Vide in the same Work, the cruel and immoral practices sanctioned by the Hindoo superstition; which supply an additional proof of the necessity of Revelation, to rectify the errors, and regulate the conduct of Man.

of this fact: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and "judgments which I speak in your ears this day. "The Lord our God made a covenant in Ho- "reb: the Lord made not this covenant with our "fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of "us alive unto this day. The Lord talked with "you face to face, out of the midst of the fire, "saying, I am the Lord your God *." Moses then repeats the Ten Commandments, and adds, "These words the Lord spake unto all your "assembly in the mount out of the midst of the "fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with "a great voice, and he added no more; and he "wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered "them unto me."

Thus awful was the promulgation of the divine Law, enjoining these great principles of duty both towards God and man; first, to the Jews, and through them, we may truly assert, to all the nations of the earth. And was not this an occasion worthy of the direct interposition of the Deity? May we not, without derogating from the wisdom and beneficence of the Divinity, ascribe to him such a Law, so promulgated?

But the Jewish religion promoted the interests of moral virtue, not merely by the positive injunctions of the Decalogue; it also inculcated clearly and authoritatively the two great principles on which all piety and virtue depend, and which our blessed Lord

* Deut. v. 1, &c.

Lord recognized as the commandments on which hang the Law and the Prophets;—the principles of LOVE TO GOD and LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOUR. The LOVE OF GOD is every where enjoined in the Mosaic Law, as the ruling disposition of the heart, from which all obedience should spring, and in which it ought to terminate. With what solemnity does the Jewish Lawgiver impress it, at the commencement of his recapitulation of the divine Law; "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all "thy soul, with all thine heart, and with all thy "might *." And again, "And now, Israel, what "doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to "fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, "and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, "with all thy heart and with all thy soul †?"

Nor is the love of our neighbour less explicitly enforced: "Thou shalt not," says the Law, "avenge, "nor bear any grudge against the children of thy "people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as "thyself: I am the Lord ‡." The operation of this benevolence thus solemnly required, was not to be confined to their own countrymen; it was to extend to the stranger, who, having renounced idolatry, was permitted to live amongst them, worshipping the true God, though without submitting to circumcision or the other ceremonial parts of the Mosaic Law. "If a stranger," says the Law, "sojourn

* Deut. vi. 4 & 5. † Ib. x. 12. ‡ Lev. xix. 18.

"sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex "him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you, shall "be unto you as one born amongst you, and thou "shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers "in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord thy God*."

Nay further, the Jewish Law recognized that exalted principle, of loving our enemies, and doing good to them that hate us; where it commanded, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going "astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. "And if thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, "lying under his burthen, and wouldest forbear to "help him; thou shalt surely help with him †." It may however be questioned, from the nature of the good offices here enjoined, as well as from the corresponding passages, which speak of a brother or fellow Jew in this case, whether this injunction could be understood to imply more, than that no private enmity between one Jew and another should interrupt that intercourse of good offices, which ought to subsist between the professors of the same religion, and members of the same community. But even thus, the Jewish religion introduced and inculcated that great principle of benevolence, as far as it was possible to practise it under the circumstances in which the Hebrew people were placed, and the design for which it was selected. All the surrounding nations were idolaters, any intimate society with whom they were commanded to

* Levit. xix. 33 & 34. † Exod. xxiii. 4 & 5.

to avoid; and no strangers could be permitted to dwell amongst them, until they had renounced idolatry; for such permission would have exposed the Jews to temptations too powerful for them to resist, as subsequent experience clearly proved. Hence the Law particularizes the children of their people, and the stranger who dwelt among them having renounced idolatry, as the objects of their benevolence, lest it should be conceived to contradict those injunctions of the same Law, which prohibited all connexion with their idolatrous neighbours, and all tolerance of idolaters within their own community; for it cannot be doubted, that had the Jews been expressly commanded to love their neighbours though idolatrous, they would have mistaken the precept as a permission to tolerate their worship, and to partake their festivities. So incapable was this gross people of understanding refined distinctions, or receiving that sublime doctrine of universal benevolence which pervades the Gospel of Christ. All however, that was possible to do, was done. The principle "Thou shalt love "thy neighbour as thyself" was clearly laid down, and its operation was by direct command extended to all with whom a Jew was permitted to hold any permanent or close connexion; so that so far as it could serve to subdue selfish feelings, and train the mind to benevolence by a perpetual series of benevolent actions, it was fully operative. A more universal precept, a more refined and exalted theory,

would

would probably have led that dull and obstinate race into errors and transgressions, subversive of all the designs for which Divine Providence established the Jewish œconomy: It was reserved for HIM to PREPARE THE WAY, FOR WHOM that œconomy was designed; the EXPECTED MESSIAH, the GOD OF LOVE AND OF MERCY, to extend and enforce the principle of benevolence; to teach men to regard all human beings requiring their aid, as friends and brethren, however different their country, however opposite their faith; to teach them to love their enemies, to return blessing for cursing and good for evil; to imitate the example of their Redeemer, who laid down his life for his friends, and in the agonies of death prayed for his persecutors. Thus it was strictly true, that the commandment of our Lord, "To love one another, even as He loved us," was NEW *. New in the universality of its application, new in the all-perfect example by which it was illustrated, and new in the sanction by which it was enforced, and the pre-eminence which it obtained in the scheme of gospel duties, where it is ranked as the peculiar characteristic of the followers of Christ, and an essential condition of obtaining forgiveness from God. But the principle was recognized in the Mosaic Law, and applied as extensively as existing circumstances would permit.

It is frequently charged on the Jewish scheme, and I believe too generally and incautiously admitted, that

* John, xiii. 34.

that it represents the Divinity as requiring from his worshippers, outward rites, rather than internal heartfelt piety; thus leading men to substitute the shadow for the substance, and attend more to unimportant circumstances, and superstitious observances, than to the great principles of judgment, justice and truth. That the Jews, in the decline of their religion, did so pervert and corrupt their Law by adopting such sentiments, is true; but most certain it is, they could find nothing in their original Law to justify such sentiments or practices. No: They could have found no sanction for mere external and superstitious worship, except in those traditions by which they obscured and perverted the original scheme of their religion: Nothing is more cautiously guarded against in the Mosaic Code, than resting in mere outward observances; nothing was more expressly and forcibly required, than internal devotion and practical piety: the Jew was called on, "to love his God with all his heart, and "all his soul, and all his might*." "The words "which I command thee this day," says the Legislator†, "shall be in THINE HEART: and thou shalt "teach them diligently to thy children, and talk of "them when thou sittest in thine house, and when "thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest "down, and when thou risest up." Could any thing be more remote from mere outward observance, than that heartfelt and habitual reverence for the divine commands

* Deut. vi. 5. † Ib. ver. 6 & 7.

commands here required? How opposite to mere ceremonious obedience is that which is enjoined in such precepts as these: "Ye shall be holy, for I "the Lord your God am holy *." "If ye will "obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, "then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me "above all people: for all the earth is mine. And "ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an "holy nation †."

The indispensable necessity of not resting in mere external observances as the means of acceptance with the Deity, appears peculiarly conspicuous, in the conditions on which alone the Jews were taught to hope for reconciliation with their God, whenever their disobedience should provoke him to banish them from the land of their inheritance, disperse them through the nations, and load them with all those punishments which their Lawgiver denounced would attend their apostasy. "It shall come to pass," says he, "when these things are come upon "thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set "before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind "among all the nations whither the Lord thy God "hath driven thee, and shall confess your iniquity "and the iniquity of your fathers; and if therefore "your UNCIRCUMCISED HEARTS BE HUMBLED, "and you accept of the punishment of your "iniquity, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, "and

* Levit. xix. 2, or xx. 7. † Exod. xix. 5 & 6.

" and shalt obey his voice according to all that I " command thee this day, with all thine heart, and " with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God " will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon " thee, and the Lord thy God will circumcise thine " heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord " thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy " soul, that thou mayest live *."

Here it is well worth observing, not only that reconciliation could be obtained only by repentance, and that no repentance would be accepted, which did not prove its sincerity by practical reformation; but that the most important and distinguishing rite of the Jewish religion, circumcision itself, is represented as emblematic of that purity of heart, which ought to be cultivated by all who adopted this external sign; and if this was true of that rite which was the badge of the Jew's religious profession, and the seal of his covenant with God, the same principle must, by necessary inference, be applied to every subordinate rite and ceremony †.

Indeed,

* Deut. xxx. 1, &c.

† That all the rites and sacrifices of the Jewish religion were incapable of conciliating divine favour, where internal piety was wanting, and were represented and considered in this light by the Jewish Lawgiver, is evident from the passages and observations adduced in this Lecture. It is equally certain the same principles are inculcated in every other part of the Old Testament. Vide the passages referred to in note, p. 226.

But it may be useful to shew, that the most respectable Jewish uninspired writers viewed the Mosaic Ritual in the same light, acknowledged that sincere piety and purity were necessary

Indeed, were we to consider the Hebrew Ritual distinctly, it would I am confident be easy to prove that

necessary to conciliate the divine favour, and considered the various rites and ceremonies of their religion, as intended to cultivate holy and virtuous affections.

Thus Josephus *, speaking of sacrifices, says, "When we "offer sacrifices to him, we do it not in order to surfeit our- "selves and be drunken, for such excesses are against the will "of God, and would be an occasion of injuries and luxury; but "by keeping ourselves sober, orderly, and ready for our other "occupations, and being more temperate than others, and for "our duty at the sacrifices themselves, we ought in the first "place to pray for the common welfare of all, and after that "for our own; for we are made for fellowship one with another, "and he who prefers the common good before what is peculiar "to himself, is above all acceptable to God:—and let our "prayers and supplications be made humbly to God, not so "much that he would give us what is good, for he hath already "given that of his own accord, and hath proposed the same "publicly to all, as that we may duly receive it, and when we "have received it, may preserve it."—On this passage Whiston judiciously and truly remarks—"That we may here observe, "how known a thing it was, that sacrifices were still accom- "panied with prayers;—whence came those phrases—of the "sacrifice of prayer—of praise—of thanksgiving." And he remarks, "that in Solomon's long and famous form of devotion, "at the dedication of the temple, where all sacrifices were to "be offered up, yet there is no mention of the sacrifices them- "selves, but of prayers only." On the purification after a funeral, Josephus observes, † "That every one may thence "learn to keep at a great distance from the thoughts of being "pure, if he hath been once guilty of murder." On the priests, Josephus observes ‡, "Moses not only enjoined them to ob- "serve purity in their sacred ministrations, but in their daily "conversation,

* Lib. II. contra Apion, sect. xxiv.

† Josephus, contra Apion, Lib. II. sect. xxvii.

‡ Antiquities, Lib. III. ch. xii. sect. iii.

that all its rites were either commemorative of such facts, or emblematic of such dispositions, as were best

" conversation, that it might be unblameable also; and on this " account it is, that they who wear the sacerdotal garments " are without spot, and eminent for their purity and sobriety, " nor are they permitted to drink wine so long as they wear " those garments; moreover they offer sacrifices that are entire " and have no defect whatsoever."

Philo, in his comments on the significancy of the dress of the priests, the sacrifices, and all the various circumstances of the Ritual, is full of the same moral and religious spirit. Indeed the inscription on the holy crown of Aaron, of HOLINESS TO THE LORD *, naturally suggested such ideas to every pious and reflecting Israelite; and Philo has pursued them certainly often with overstrained refinement and fanciful ingenuity. But his writings shew, that the enlightened Jews, when Christianity was introduced (for Philo was cotemporary with the Apostles) were much addicted to spiritual and moral views of their Ritual and Law.

Speaking of the sprinkling the garments of Aaron and his sons, and the altar, &c. Lev. viii. 10, 11, 12, and 30, he remarks, " Moses did this, wishing they should be holy, not only exter- " nally and visibly, but internally; since all things, even in the " interior of the temple, were purified by this holy ointment†." On the brazen laver which had been made of brazen mirrors, he remarks, " The priests, who were about to enter the temple, " were to purify themselves, washing their hands and feet as a " symbol of innocency of life, and of a pure livelihood, obtained " by praiseworthy means: and each should remember that the " materials of this vessel were mirrors; so that each should " contemplate his own mind as it were in a mirror; and if he " should discover in it the turpitude of irrational affection, or " the

* Exod. xxxix. 30.

† Philonis, Lib. III. de Vita Mosis, p. 521, *f.* and 525, *b.* I have endeavoured to translate Philo's words as closely as I could. No part of his works has been translated into English (so far as I know) though certainly many parts deserve it.—For Josephus, I generally adopt Whiston's Translation.

best calculated to form the mind to steady rectitude, internal purity, and sincere devotion. One instance, as

" the immoderate love of pleasure, or grief depressing him to " excess, or turning him from rectitude, or desire stimulating " him to any thing forbidden, he should reform and cure it, and " study to acquire the pure and genuine beauty of the mind." But all Philo's works are so full of this, especially his beautiful Tract on Philanthropy or Charity*, that it is unnecessary to multiply quotations.

The celebrated Maimonides, in his " More Nevochim," or " Instructor of those who are perplexed," a work containing many judicious and learned elucidations of Scripture difficulties, and particularly an excellent exposition of the grounds and reasons of the Mosaic Laws; and who, having published a laborious comment on the Mischna or system of Jewish traditions, may be supposed to speak the general sense of the Jewish Rabbinical doctors, has an express chapter, (Part. III. ch. xxxiii.) to shew, " That the prohibition of external uncleanness and im- " purity, by the Law, is instrumental of and subservient to the " purification of the heart;" and has these strong words: " Cleanliness of dress, washing of the body, and the removal " of all dirt and squalidness, is certainly the intention of the " Law; but subordinate to the purification of the conduct and " the heart, from depraved opinions and corrupt morals. For, " to think that exterior purity, by ablutions of the body and " the dress, can be sufficient, though in other respects a man " indulges himself in gluttony and drunkenness, is the extremest " madness."

Such are the sentiments of this celebrated Rabbi, conformable to the obvious intention of the Law, and we may be assured, to the sentiments of all pious and reflecting Jews, in every period of their nation. Consult, on this subject, Mr. Moses Lowman, on the Hebrew Ritual. If the student wishes for a still more learned disquisition, he will find it in Maimonides More Nevochim, Part III. from chap. xxvi. to the end; Spencer

* Vide his Works, p. 539.

as more immediately connected with this subject, I will briefly mention *.

For every transgression, the Levitical Law prescribed a trespass-offering: where the transgression was of a mere ritual precept, and committed without deliberation or design, when discovered, the trespass-offering was sufficient alone; for this shewed that the offender acknowledged the authority of the Law which he had unintentionally violated: but where the transgression included any encroachment on the rights of another, the trespass-offering could not be received, except it was accompanied by a public acknowledgment of the offence, a resignation of the usurped property, and a restitution to the person injured, if he or his heir could be found; if not, the usurped property was to be consecrated to pious uses, as the offender could not procure pardon while he retained it.—What regulation could point out more clearly the inefficacy of sacrifice, where guilt was not unfeignedly repented of, and all the advantages, which had tempted to its perpetration, renounced and resigned, and where full

Spencer de Legibus Hebræorum, Lib. I. from ch. iv. to the end, and the entire of the second book; observing, however, that the system of this learned writer is in many points successfully combated by Witsius. Vide Witsii Ægyptiaca, Lib. III. who appears to me to establish his opinion, notwithstanding that Warburton has espoused the scheme of Spencer. Vide the Fifth Lecture of this Part; also, the Divine Legation, B. IV. sect. vi.

* Vide Levit. ch. v. & vi.; also Numb. v. 7, &c.

full restitution to the injured individual did not accompany humiliation before God?

Another observation on this subject, of great weight, is, that the reverence which the Jew was taught his God required, is perpetually represented not as terminating in prayers and religious services alone; but as a practical principle, which was to regulate his conduct towards his neighbour, and display itself by judgment, by justice, by humanity, and particularly by shewing mercy to the poor and the stranger, the widow and the fatherless, to whom God is represented as bearing the peculiar relation of patron, protector and friend.—I might adduce numerous passages to establish this significancy of circumcision, and this practical application of the reverence due to God; but I shall content myself with one, decisive of both, even the solemn requisition of their Legislator when he recapitulates their Laws, and denounces the curses which should follow their violation, and the blessings which should reward their observance—a passage * which includes and contains all the arguments I have advanced on this topic: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy "God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, "to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve "the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all "thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord "thy

* Deut. x. 12, &c.

" thy God, and his statutes which I command thee " this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and " the heaven of heavens is the Lord thy God's, the " earth also with all that therein is. Only the Lord " had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he " chose their seed after them, even you, above all " people, as it is this day. CIRCUMCISE THERE- " FORE THE FORESKIN OF YOUR HEART, and be " no more stiff-necked. For the Lord your God " is God of gods, a great God, a mighty and a " terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh " reward. He doth execute the judgment of the " fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in " giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore " the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of " Egypt. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him " shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and " swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is " thy God, that hath done for thee these great and " terrible things which thine eyes have seen. Thy " fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and " ten persons: and now the Lord thy God hath " made thee as the stars in heaven for multitude. " Therefore shalt thou love the Lord thy God, and " keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judg- " ments, and his commandments alway."

Thus, on a REVIEW of the topics we have discussed, it appears that the Jewish Law promulgated the great principles of moral duty in the Decalogue, with

with a solemnity suited to their high pre-eminence: that it enjoined love to God with the most unceasing solicitude, and love to our neighbour, as extensively and forcibly, as the peculiar design of the Jewish œconomy, and the peculiar character of the Jewish people, would permit: that it impressed the deepest conviction of God's requiring, not mere external observances, but heartfelt piety, well regulated desires, and active benevolence: that it taught, sacrifice could not obtain pardon without repentance, or repentance without reformation and restitution: that it described circumcision itself, and by consequence, every other legal rite, as designed to typify and inculcate internal holiness, which alone could render men acceptable to God: that it represented the love of God as designed to act as a practical principle, stimulating to the constant and sincere cultivation of purity, mercy and truth: and that it enforced all these principles and precepts by sanctions the most likely to operate powerfully on minds unaccustomed to abstract speculations and remote views, even by temporal rewards and punishments; the assurance of which was confirmed from the immediate experience of similar rewards and punishments, dispensed to their enemies and to themselves, by that supernatural Power which had delivered the Hebrew nation out of Egypt, conducted them through the wilderness, planted them in the land of Canaan, regulated their government,

government, distributed their possessions, and to which alone they could look to obtain new blessings, or secure those already enjoyed. From all this I derive another presumptive argument for the divine authority of the Mosaic Code; and I contend, that a moral system thus perfect, promulgated at so early a period, to such a people, and enforced by such sanctions as no human power could undertake to execute, strongly bespeaks a divine original.

PART II.

LECTURE III.

LECTURE III.

THE Penal Code of the Jewish Law conformable to its moral and religious system—Capital crimes—Idolatry, and the various crimes connected with it—Strict prohibition of human sacrifices—Supplementary sanctions, presupposing a special providence—Jewish constitution a Theocracy—Severity against idolatry justified—Jewish Law prohibits all impurity—yet not unnaturally austere—Disobedience to parents how punished—Wisdom of the Mosaic Law, respecting murder and manslaughter—with respect to slavery—and false witnesses—Principle of retaliation explained—Equity of punishment for the invasion of property—Mildness of Laws towards slaves—Form of trial—Consistence of the Religious and Penal Code.

PART II.

LECT. III.

EXODUS, xxi. 14.

"If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay "him with guile: thou shalt take him from mine altar, that "he may die."

IN the last Lecture we reviewed the Moral Precepts of the Jewish Law, and the practical tendency of the Jewish Ritual; which appeared worthy of that divine original to which they are ascribed. But these religious commands and general principles of morality, however useful and important, could not alone be sufficient to form the character, and regulate the conduct of the nation, if unsupported by civil laws. And as the entire constitution of the Jews, civil and religious, was attributed to the same divine authority; in order to shew it was not unworthy of such a sacred origin, it is necessary to examine, how far the PENAL CODE* of the Jewish Law

* Consult on this subject Maimonides More Nevochim, Pars III. cap. xli; and Spencer's Dissertatio de Theocratia Judaica, præcipue cap. vi. p. 204.

Law was conformable to the principles of its religious system, and the moral instructions of its Legislator.

In examining the Mosaic penal code, we find that at the head of its capital crimes was placed IDOLATRY. *Not only the act itself, but every attempt to seduce men to it, and every mode of conduct which presupposed or obviously led to it. Against this offence the strictest rigour was exercised: no partiality for the dearest relative was to induce concealment; no dignity to silence accusation; no multitude of offenders to deter from punishment. "If (says the Lawgiver) thy brother, the "son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or "the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as "thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let "us go and serve other gods; thou shalt not consent "unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall "thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither "shalt thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill "him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him "to death, and afterwards the hand of all the peo-"ple. And if thou shalt hear say in one of thy "cities, Certain men, the children of Belial, are "gone-out from among you, and have withdrawn "the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and "serve other gods, then shall ye enquire, and ask "diligently; and behold, if it be truth, and the "thing certain, that such abomination is wrought "among

* Vide Maimónides More Nevochim, cap. xxxii.

" among you; thou shalt smite the inhabitants of " that city with the edge of the sword, destroying " it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle " thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou " shalt gather all the spoils of it into the midst " of the street thereof; and shalt burn with fire " the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for " the Lord thy God: and it shall be an heap for " ever, it shall never be built again*."

One species of idolatry is marked with peculiar abhorrence, that of giving their seed unto Moloch, or burning their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. This the Deity directs to be punished with death: if the punishment is neglected, he denounces that he will himself execute vengeance, as well on the offender, as on those who designedly suffered him to escape with impunity: thus MARKING WITH PECULIAR ABHORRENCE THE EXECRABLE CUSTOM OF HUMAN SACRIFICES†, which, to the disgrace of reason and humanity, so long polluted the earth; even in nations and periods which we are accustomed to honour with the epithets of enlightened and civilized‡. Any imitation of such horrid rites in the worship of the true God, the Law thus expressly forbids: " When the Lord thy " God shall cast out the nations from before thee, " take

* Deut. xiii. 6, &c.

† Vide Jewish Letters to Voltaire, Part III. Let. vi. Vol. II. p. 68; and Findlay's Answer to Voltaire, Part II. ch. ii. sect. vi. and vii. p. 137; and Doddridge, Lect. clviii. sect. 8.

‡ Vide supra, Part II. Lect. I. pp. 193, 196.

"take heed to thyself that thou enquire not after
"their gods, saying, How did these nations serve
"their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou
"shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every
"abomination of the Lord which he hateth have
"they done unto their gods; for even their sons
"and their daughters have they burnt in the fire
"to their gods *."

On

* Deut. xii. 29, &c.—Compare with this text the energy with which Jeremiah, vii. 29—34. reprobates the Jews for transgressing its prohibition: "The Lord" (says the Prophet) "hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath; "for the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith "the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house "which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have "built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of "the son of Hinnom, TO BURN THEIR SONS AND THEIR "DAUGHTERS IN THE FIRE; WHICH I COMMANDED THEM "NOT, NEITHER CAME IT INTO MY HEART. Therefore be-"hold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more "be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but "The valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet till "there be no place. And the carcases of this people shall be "meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the "earth; and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause "to cease from the city of Judah, and from the streets of Jeru-"salem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the "voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the "land shall be desolate." Yet, notwithstanding the direct prohibition of the legislator, the condemnation of the prophet, and the interposition of Providence to punish the offering of human sacrifices, infidel writers, particularly Voltaire, have had the hardihood to charge the Mosaic Law with demanding, or at least permitting them. How unreasonably, vide the Works referred to in the last note.

On the same principle, of preserving the allegiance due to the supreme Jehovah, resorting or pretending to resort to supernatural agency, in order to discover or to control future events, as it implied a dependence on inferior spirits, was a violation of allegiance to the true and only God, who declared himself the peculiar guardian of this people, ever ready to assist them in any distress, and communicate to them any necessary information as to futurity, when piously and humbly consulted according to the regulations * of his Law. Hence those who had (as they asserted or supposed) familiar spirits, those who practised enchantments or witchcraft, were to be punished with death.

On the same principle, the blasphemer, and the deliberate presumptuous sabbath-breaker †, and the false prophet, as they openly shook off all reverence for the great Jehovah, were also to suffer death.

In other cases of disobedience, proceeding from similar disregard to the divine authority, but not manifesting itself by acts so plainly cognizable by human tribunals, the Legislator denounces, "That "the perpetrators should bear their iniquity, and "should be cut off from their people:" that is, God would either cut them off from the communion of his

* Vide Numbers ix. 7 &, 8. and xxvii. 21. compared with Joshua, ix. 14. Judges, i. 1. and 2 Sam. v. 23. And consult Lowman on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, ch. xi.; and Spencer's Dissertatio Septima de Urim et Thummim.

† Vide Numbers, xvi. 32. Deut. xvii. 12. and xviii. 20.

his people, and all the advantages of that covenant he had entered into with them; or he would interfere, and punish their crime by a supernatural and premature death. Thus, "if a man hide his eyes "from him who giveth his seed unto Molech, and "kill him not; then will I set my face against that "man, says the Lord, and against his family, and "will cut him off*." The Lord also threatens to cut off the man who did not afflict his soul on the great day of atonement †: the man who did not celebrate the Passover, or who broke its solemn regulations: these, and other actions or omissions not easily discoverable by or proveable before human tribunals ‡, are prohibited under a similar penalty.

* Lev. xx. five first verses.

† Lev. xxiii. 29, 30. also Exod. xxxi. 14. of the violation of the Sabbath; Numbers, xv. 30. of the presumptuous offender; Numbers, xix. 13, of him who defiled the tabernacle; Lev. xviii. and xx. of unnatural crimes; also Numbers xix. 20. Lev. xxii. 3. and Exod. xii. 15 & 19.

‡ Vide, on the reasons of such of these precepts as relate to actions of a less criminal nature, Maimonides More Nevochim, Pars III. cap. xli. p. 463; and for others, cap. xxxvii. p. 447. where he notices that the prohibition, Lev. xix. 27. against rounding the corner of the hair on the head and the beard, was given, because the idolatrous priests were accustomed to use that particular tonsure. He assigns a similar reason for the precept of not using a garment of linen and woollen mixed together, Lev. xix. 19. this being a particular dress in idolatrous rites; and for the precept, Deut. xxii. 5. that the woman should not wear the dress of a man, or vice versâ. Besides its obvious tendency to preserve modesty and purity of manners, Maimonides observes, that a man dressed in a coloured female dress in honour of Venus, and a woman dressed in armour worshipping at the shrine of the statue of Mars.

penalty. An equally special interference of Providence, for the detection and punishment of guilt, is implied in the trial by the waters of jealousy*, and in the penalty denounced against particular acts of impurity; that the perpetrators of them should bear their iniquity †, and die childless.

I have thus particularly noticed the severity of the Laws against idolatry, and the peculiar circumstance, of the Mosaic code sanctioning many of its prohibitions by penalties, which the direct interference of the Deity alone could inflict; because the submission to Laws so severe, and the promulgation of prohibitions so sanctioned, appears unaccountable, if we do not admit the truth of the Mosaic history; which declares, that the Jewish government was founded on a solemn covenant with God, when on Mount Horeb the divine glory appeared to the assembled nation, and the Lord talked with them face to face out of the midst of the fire, and delivered the ten commandments, and declared unto the people: "If ye will obey my voice indeed "and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar "treasure

* Numbers, ch. v.—It has been well remarked, that this species of ordeal could not injure the innocent at all, or punish the guilty except by a miracle; while, in the ordeals by fire, &c. in the dark ages, the innocent could scarcely escape, but by a miracle.

† Levit. xx. 20.

"treasure unto me above all people; for all the "earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a "kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. And "Moses came, and called all the elders of the "people, and laid before their faces all these "words which the Lord commanded him. And "all the people answered and said, All that the "Lord hath spoken, we will do*." On this solemn compact was founded the Jewish government in which the Lord Jehovah appeared as the immediate sovereign, and the Jewish people his immediate subjects. Hence such prohibitions as human tribunals could not easily take cognizance of, were sanctioned by penalties which God, their sovereign, undertook to execute. Hence, no authority by the Mosaic constitution was vested in any one man or body of men in the Jewish government, nor even in the whole nation assembled, to make new † Laws, or alter old ones, their sovereign, Jehovah, reserving this power to himself. Hence the Jewish constitution recognized no one hereditary chief magistrate; and no power was given to any one body, or even to the whole nation, to elect any supreme governor. It was reserved to Jehovah, their sovereign, to appoint as he pleased, who

* Exod. xix. 5, &c.; also Deut. xxvi. 16, &c.

† Deut. iv. 1 & 2. and xii. 32. Vide also Lowman on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, ch. vii.; and Spencer de Theocratia Judaica, cap. i.; also Leydeker's learned work de Republica Hebræorum, Lib. V. de Theocratia Hebræorum.

who was to preside under the title of judge, and with an authority delegated from him *. And finally, hence every act of idolatry was not only an apostasy from true religion, but an act of TREASON AGAINST THE STATE †, a breach of that original contract and charter, on which the Jewish constitution was founded, and on which the national property and privileges depended; and therefore, according to the principles of every established government in the world, merited and received capital punishment.

NEXT TO IDOLATRY, the Jewish Law seems to have condemned with peculiar emphasis, and punished with peculiar severity, ALL KINDS OF IMPURITY ‡; every species of incestuous connexion and unnatural crime, was punished with death. Besides, not only was forcible violation capital, as by our Law, but the violation of the marriage vow. The ADULTERER and the ADULTERESS WERE CONDEMNED TO SUFFER A PUBLIC AND IGNOMINIOUS EXECUTION. The same punishment was the consequence, where the female, though not married,

* Vide Numbers, xxvii. 15, &c. for the appointment of Joshua; Lowman, ib. ch. x.; and Spencer de Theocratia Judaica, cap. iv. sect. iii. p. 198.

† Vide Lowman on the Civil Code of the Hebrews, ch. xii. p. 231. and ch. xii. p. 263, &c.; Warburton's Divine Leg. B. V. sect. ii.; Spenceri Dissertatio de Theocratia Judaica, p. 205.

‡ Vide Lev. ch. xviii. and ch. xx. from ver. 10. to the end; also Deut. xxvii. from 20. and xxii. from 22. as to the punishment of adultery, &c.

married, was betrothed in marriage. In a word, we perceive the most anxious care to cut off every greater degree of licentiousness, and stigmatize even the least with infamy; yet never did this care degenerate into an extravagant reverence for unnatural austerity, and monastic celibacy. In every rank, from the high priest to the lowest peasant, marriage was encouraged and honourable. Our blessed Lord, indeed, has declared, that some permissions relating to marriage, granted to the Jews for the hardness of their hearts, were inconsistent with the more pure and refined morality of the Gospel *; yet, notwithstanding this, we perceive in the Jewish Law so strong an opposition to the usual licentiousness of Eastern manners, and so decided a superiority in this respect above the legislators and the philosophers of the heathen world, and still more above their religious institutions—as tend strongly to prove, that a system so favourable to the interests of virtue, and restraining so powerfully and yet so judiciously the excesses of passion—a system introduced at that early period, in an Eastern climate, and amongst a people accustomed to be irresistibly led by objects of sense—had a higher origin than mere human wisdom; and that to secure submission to its restraints, required an interference more powerful than mere human authority.

Another

* Vide Matt. v. 27, &c.; and xix. from 3 to 10. plainly prohibiting polygamy and divorce, which were not punishable amongst the Jews, when under certain limitations.

Another crime which the Jewish Law punished with peculiar severity, was DISOBEDIENCE TO PARENTS. "Every one," says the Law, "that "curseth his father or his mother, shall be surely "put to death *." And again, "If a man have a "stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey "the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, "and that, when they have chastened him, will not "hearken unto them; then shall his father and "his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out "to the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his "place; and they shall say unto the elders of his "city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he "will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a "drunkard. And all the men of his city shall "stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou "put away evil from among you, and all Israel "shall hear, and fear †." Undoubtedly, in thus enforcing filial obedience, the Jewish Law laid the foundation of every virtue. He who despises parental instruction, tramples on parental authority, and feels no gratitude for parental affection in his earlier years, will probably, as his passions strengthen and his depraved habits grow inveterate, trample on the authority of laws both human and divine, and requite with ingratitude all the benefits which man can confer, and all the blessings which the

* Lev. xx. 9. † Deut. xxi. 18—21.

the Divinity bestows. But in establishing this important principle, we see nothing is harsh or overstrained: the parents have no such arbitrary power as under the ancient Roman Law*, which armed the father with the absolute right of life and death over his children, and even allowed him to sell them three times over; a power which lasted during their whole lives, or ended only with the third sale. Nor was such extreme parental power deemed unreasonable in Greece; where it was maintained, that the power of a father of a family over his slaves and his children was absolute. On the contrary, in the Jewish Law all is just and moderate †. The offence of cursing father or mother implied such hardened impiety, as well as such extreme contempt and malignity towards the authors of our existence, as strikes the heart with horror, and indicates the extremest moral depravity. Equally worthy of reprobation and punishment, is persevering and obstinate stubbornness and rebellion against that exercise of parental authority which would restrain drunkenness and debauchery. And when such disobedience was investigated by a solemn and public trial, and established by a judicial conviction, it surely merited infamy and death: "That all Israel should hear "and fear, and put away evil from among them."

MURDER,

* Vide the Laws of the Twelve Tables, Table iv. Law the first and second; Hook's Roman History, Vol. II. p. 143.

† Maimonides More Nevochim, Pars III. cap. xli. p. 463.

MURDER, as it is the highest degree of malignity to which human depravity can ascend, so it was pursued with just rigour by the Jewish Law. "If "a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, "to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from "mine altar, that he die *." But the wisdom of the Jewish Law in securing a fair trial for this offence, so apt to rouse immediate revenge, and in providing asylums for those who were guilty not of deliberate murder, but of manslaughter, is so conspicuous, as to have attracted the notice of the most judicious modern reasoners on criminal law. Moses directed the establishment of six cities of refuge †, three on each side Jordan, at such distances as made immediate flight to some one of them easy from every part of the Jewish territory; hither the manslayer was to fly, until the action was tried: if innocent, he was to continue in the city of refuge, until the ‡ death of the high priest for the time being, when it might be supposed the passion of the friends to the deceased would have subsided. On this Law, the sagacious Montesquieu observes, "These Laws of Moses were perfectly wise. The "man who involuntarily killed another was inno- "cent, but he was obliged to be taken away from "before the eyes of the relatives of the deceased; "Moses therefore appointed an asylum for such "unfortunate persons. Great criminals deserved "not

* Exod. xxi. 14. † Deut. xix.
‡ Numbers, xxxv. 25.

" not a place of safety, and they had none. The " criminals who would resort to the temple from all " parts, might disturb divine service. If persons " who had committed manslaughter had been driven " out of the country, as was customary among the " Greeks, they had reason to fear they would " worship strange gods. All these considerations " made them establish cities of refuge, where they " might remain until the death of the high-priest *."

On this subject it is necessary to observe, that as liberty is equally valuable with life, the Jewish Law with the strictest equity ordained, that if any man were convicted of attempting to reduce any fellow-citizen to slavery, he should be punished with death †.

The only offence not already noticed, which was capitally punished in the Mosaic code, was that of PRESUMPTUOUS DISOBEDIENCE ‡ to the decision of the chief magistrate, whether high priest or judge, who should preside at the supreme national court of judicature, which gave judgment on the last appeal. The necessity of this was obvious: any man or body of men who were guilty of such contumacious resistance to the supreme authority of the state, evidently violated the original compact of national union; and declared themselves not only alienated from, but at war, as well with the whole body of the nation, as

* Spirit of Laws, Book XXV. ch. iii.

† Exod. xxi. 16.

‡ Deut. xvii. 12. Vide also Lowman on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, ch. xiv.

as with that great Jehovah, whom the Jewish people recognized as their sovereign, the author of their laws, and the head of their national confederacy.

Such were the offences punished capitally by the Jewish Law: perhaps to these we ought to add, that of bearing false witness in a case where the life of the accused was at stake: for, in all instances, the punishment to be inflicted on the false witness was the same as the mischief that would have followed, had his testimony been received as true *.

In other penal Laws of the Mosaic code, there prevails a constant spirit of mildness and equity, I believe unequalled in any other system of jurisprudence, ancient or modern. Personal violence and assault were punished by damages, or by retaliating on the offender a punishment similar to the injury his violence had inflicted, as the judges should determine †. I cannot but notice here, how strangely the Jews perverted this principle of retaliation recognized by their Law; and how obstinately some moderns choose to misunderstand it, as if it authorized the retaliation of injury by the arm of the individual, and made each man a judge and avenger in his own cause; a principle altogether foreign from the meaning of the Legislator. In every instance where this principle is applied, a legal tribunal was to ascertain, and the public executive power to inflict, the punishment.

One

* Deut. xix. 16, &c.

† Exod. xxi. 23. Lev. xxiv. 18. Deut. xix. 19 & 21.

One striking difference exists between the Mosaic penal code, and that, I believe, of most modern states: no injury affecting only property, was punished by death; restitution was required, or an additional fine imposed, suited to the nature of the offence; or at the utmost, if the offender was too poor to make restitution, or pay the regulated fine, he might be sold as a slave (still however within the pale of the Jewish nation;) but this slavery could not exceed seven years, as the Sabbatic year would necessarily terminate it. This difference may perhaps be accounted for, from the more equal distribution of property amongst the Jews; from their being more generally resident in the country, employed in agriculture, and therefore, probably partaking of that simplicity of manners, natural to such a mode of life; and from their wealth consisting more in flocks and herds, and the produce of the earth, than in money: circumstances, which would all combine to diminish the temptations, increase the difficulty, and confine the extent of depredations on property. But above all, it will be said, the Jews were not a commercial nation; and commerce it is, which renders the strictest vigilance over property and credit of every kind essential to the existence of the state. Yet, even with all these allowances, must we not confess that the Jewish Law adjusted its punishments more suitably to the real degree of moral depravity attending different species of guilt, than modern

codes, which permit some of the most atrocious instances of moral turpitude to pass with trivial punishments, or none at all, while they punish even slight invasions of property with ignominious death? At all events, if private property was sufficiently secured by the milder penalties with which it was guarded under the Mosaic code, this circumstance supplies one instance of its happy operation. If, on the other hand, it be maintained, that the crimes of adultery, obstinate disobedience to parents, and perjury when intended to destroy the innocent man's life, cannot now be capitally punished, for that penal laws so extremely rigorous would never be executed, and therefore would be ineffectual; while we daily see our scaffolds loaded with criminals prosecuted and condemned for violations of property, will the conclusion be favourable to modern manners? Can we avoid suspecting, that our hearts are more anxious for money, than for virtue; and that such lenity proves we slight the crimes to which we are thus indulgent, notwithstanding the holiness of that religion we profess, rather than that we act from pure mercy to the criminal?

It further deserves to be noticed, that the penal code of the Jews guarded the person of the servant and the slave, as well as of the freeman *: that the injunction,

* Vide Jews Letters to Voltaire, Part III. Letter iv. Vol. II. p. 39, &c.; Maimonides More Nevochim, Pars III. cap. xxix. p. 455.; and Levis's Defence of the Old Testament, p. 68.

injunction, "Whosoever smiteth a man, that he die, "shall surely be put to death *," equally protected all. If, by an extreme severity of chastisement, the master caused the death of his slave, "he was "surely to be punished:" if the violence offered maimed the servant, even so slightly as by the loss of a single tooth, he was to be recompensed by obtaining immediate freedom †. The chastity of female slaves was guarded by strict regulations ‡; and no Jew could be a slave for longer than seven years; and at the end of that period, the Law enjoined, "When thou sendest him out from thee, "thou shalt not let him go away empty. Thou "shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and "out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of "that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed "thee, thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt "remember that thou wast a bondman in the land "of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: "therefore I command thee this thing to-day §." Compare such laws and regulations, with the Spartans butchering the Helots in cold blood;—with the Romans torturing their slaves without mercy for trifling offences, or putting whole families to death on the slightest suspicion of more atrocious guilt;

* Exod. xxi. 12. † Ib. ver. 20 & 26.

‡ Exod. xxi. 7—10. Vide also the Jews Letters to Voltaire, Part III. Letter i. sect. iv. and Philo de Charitate, p. 545. letter *f*. Vide on the Slaves of the Romans, Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws, Book XV. ch. xi.

§ Deut. xv. 13—15.

guilt; or compelling them to butcher each other in gladiatorial combats, for the sport of the populace. Compare the Mosaic regulations respecting female slaves, with the universal and abominable licentiousness which polluted every ancient nation in their intercourse with slaves;—and observe on one side, the * rebellions of this wretched class of beings in Greece and Rome, which, while they proved the misery of the individuals, endangered the safety of the state—and on the other side, the uniform public tranquillity in this instance among the Jews; and then decide, whether such regulations at that early period, in an Asiatic nation, do not bespeak a wisdom and benevolence far superior to what we could rationally expect from a mere human Legislator †.

It

* In the two servile wars in Sicily against the Romans, it is computed a million of slaves were destroyed, and several Roman generals were defeated. Vide Hook's Roman History, Book VII. ch. iv. Vol. VII. p. 133. Vide also the Jews Letters to Voltaire, Part III. Letter iv. Vol. II. p. 40.—Montesquieu observes, "That in the degenerate age of the Romans, they lived among "their slaves as among enemies; they made the Syllanian "Senatus Consultum, and other laws, which decreed, that when "a master was murdered, all the slaves under the same roof, "or in any place so near the house as to be within the hearing "of a man's voice, should without distinction be condemned to "die." Spirit of Laws, Book XV, ch. xvi.

† Unhappily, we may illustrate the superiority of the Jewish institution as to slaves, by comparing them with the atrocious crimes and cruelties, committed in obtaining and managing slaves by the enlightened Nations of Europe in our own times: who, disregarding the benevolent spirit and clear authority of

that

It may confirm us in this conclusion, to observe other circumstances connected with the administration of penal justice amongst the Jews. Their trials were public, in the gates of the city; their Judges, the Elders and Levites, were taken as our jurors, from the general mass of citizens, and therefore, like them,

that religion they profess, persevere to accumulate on themselves and their countries such aggravated guilt, as fills the minds of the pious and reflecting with the most alarming expectation, that the signal judgments of God will awfully chastise such depravity, publicly known and nationally tolerated! May the numerous and illustrious Advocates in the cause of Mercy and Christianity, so violently outraged by the miseries of the wretched Africans, every where speedily and completely effect their glorious purpose; and especially in England, where the principles of civil liberty and true religion, so generally and strongly felt, seem only to aggravate the guilt of their violation in this melancholy instance! I rejoice that the Merchants of Ireland have not (at least as far as I can discover) disgraced themselves by engaging in this dreadful traffic. It was, I understand, once proposed in a northern town of Ireland; but it was indignantly rejected.

Since the publication of the first Edition of this Work, Providence has blessed the Advocates for the abolition of the Slave Trade with that success, which their truly christian perseverance in this Cause of Mercy so eminently merited. The English Parliament has wiped off this foul stain from their Country, and the Sons of Britain are in every part of the world the guardians of freedom, and seem prepared to be the instruments for diffusing Civilization, Christianity and Happiness.—The continued exertions of the Society which combined to abolish the Slave Trade, and now watches to secure the execution of that glorious measure, and to repair the injuries which Europe has inflicted on Africa, by promoting the civilization and happiness of its inhabitants—The Sierra Leone Company, labouring for the same beneficent purpose—The various

them, likely to be thoroughly acquainted with the character of the parties, the credit of the witnesses, and every circumstance which ought to be considered in determining the crime and estimating the punishment. No torture before conviction, no cruelty after it, was permitted by the Mosaic code; the law limited the number of stripes which might be inflicted on a criminal: "Thou shalt not punish "thy brother with more than forty stripes, lest he "seem vile unto thee *," was its injunction, at once humane and wise. It guarded innocence against the insidious attacks of false accusers, by directing that no man should be capitally convicted, except by the concurrent testimony of two unimpeached witnesses †; as well as by inflicting on the witnesses convicted of falsehood, whatever punishment or loss his testimony, if credited, would have brought down upon the innocent.

Such was the Penal Code of the Jewish Legislator. And do we not perceive that it is founded on the same principles as his moral and religious system, and that both display a spirit of wisdom, rectitude

various Societies for disseminating the Scriptures, and establishing Missions for spreading the light of the Gospel through the remotest lands—The Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews both in England and Ireland—all these supply instances of this most gratifying truth—and seem like the dawning of a brighter day now opening on those regions of the earth, which had been so long darkened by infidelity and barbarism.

* Deut. xxv. 3. † Ib. xvii. 6.

rectitude and piety, far superior to any which could naturally be expected at that early period, in an Eastern people, long debased by slavery, and exhibiting in their national character no traces of superior natural ingenuity, or intellectual refinement? Yet at that period, and in that nation, a system of morals and religion was established, which promulgated the admirable summary of moral precepts enforced in the Decalogue *; which inculcated love to God, love to our neighbour, kindness even to enemies; which taught the necessity of repentance for offences, and of restitution for injuries; which declared that God could not be conciliated by mere external observances, but that all ceremonies were intended to excite, and ought to be accompanied by, sincere purity and piety, by obedience and benevolence; and that the love of God was not to rest in mere outward worship, or even in religious feelings and devotion alone, but to operate as a practical principle, inspiring moral virtue, and rousing to active benevolence, particularly towards the stranger and the poor, the fatherless and the widow, to whom the Deity was declared to bear the relation of peculiar protector and friend.

In addition to these general religious commands and moral principles, we have examined into the PENAL CODE of the Jews. And it has, I trust, appeared, that this equally tends to guard true religion,

* Vide the two last Lectures.

religion, and enforce virtuous conduct; punishing capitally, idolatry, with its train of profanations and crimes—adultery and impurity in all its pollutions, with a rigour unexampled in any nation of Asiatic origin, and yet uncultivated minds—murder— obstinate disobedience to parents—presumptuous defiance of the divine Law, and resistance to the supreme authority of the state. We have observed, that while the Jewish constitution allowed no asylum for atrocious criminals, it provided with admirable wisdom for the fair trial of those who were only guilty of manslaughter; that it punished inferior offences, whether against the person or property, with mildness and equity; that it protected the slave as well as the freeman; that in its Judges, the form of its trials, and its regulations as to witnesses, it was admirably calculated to promote justice and to guard innocence; and that the whole scheme and universal spirit of its penal code, and its judicial system, was strictly conformable to the tenor of the religion which was taught, and the moral principles which were inculcated from divine authority. This conformity seems to me to supply a strong presumption in favour of the sacred original of the Jewish constitution, both religious and civil. A system so pious, so pure, so strict, so wise, so equitable, so humane, so superior to every thing which could naturally be expected at such a period, in such a climate, and amongst such a people, seems unaccountable, if we reject the

opinion of its sacred original, and attribute it merely to human artifice and pious fraud. This conclusion will, I trust, derive additional support from examining into the political principles of the Jewish government, and inquiring how far these were calculated to promote virtue, freedom, and union in the state, and secure to every rank in society their just and natural rights. This, therefore, shall be the subject of our next inquiry.

PART II.

LECTURE IV.

POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE JEWISH LAW.

LECTURE IV.

THE political principles of the Jewish Law—Importance of the mode in which property is distributed in a state—Agrarian Law of Lycurgus, &c.—Defects of the Spartan constitution in this point—Agrarian Law among the Jews—how guarded—promoted agriculture and attachment to rural life—Jewish nobility and gentry—Jewish yeomanry sufficient for defensive war—Offensive wars effectually discouraged by the Jewish constitution—Constitution of the tribe of Levi peculiar to the Jewish scheme—Its great utility—Jewish Law guarded the rights and comforts of the very lowest classes—of the stranger—the poor—the aged and infirm—Recapitulation.

PART II.

LECT. IV.

POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE JEWISH LAW.

NUMBERS, xxxiii. 50 & 54.

"AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Ye shall divide the "land by lot for an inheritance among your families; to the "more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer "ye shall give the less inheritance: according to the tribes "of your fathers ye shall inherit."

AS the Scriptures ascribe not only the religious and moral part of the Jewish Law to a divine original, but also the civil code and political constitution of the Jewish government; which, it has been proved*, was a direct theocracy; it becomes necessary to examine, how far this constitution was calculated to guard the freedom and union of the Jewish state, to secure to its subjects of every rank their just and natural rights, and to diffuse a universal spirit of industry, virtue, and peace. This therefore

* Vide supra, p. 25, and the last Lecture.

therefore shall be the object of our inquiry in this Lecture; and if it leads me to reflections, which shall at first appear rather historical and political, than theological and religious, yet the close connexion of the topic with the vindication of so important a part of Revelation, as that which describes the Jewish œconomy, will, I trust, plead my excuse.

The mode in which property is distributed, has perhaps the chief influence, in every state, in determining the character and effects of its constitution. Property carries with it authority and power. Where the lower classes are wholly destitute of it, they are generally dependent and servile; while those who monopolize it, are too often arrogant and corrupt. If there exists no rank of citizens possessing moderate shares of it, with a secure tenure, there is little probability of finding any class of society exhibiting the purest virtues, the most useful industry, and the most independent spirit. Nor does any circumstance tend to inflame domestic feuds, or expose to foreign violence, more than an extremely unequal distribution or uncertain tenure of property.

In confirmation of these observations, I need only hint at the discord and misery which the want or the violation of an Agrarian Law produced in Rome, and the praise which has been ever given to the Agrarian Law of Lycurgus. Yet, notwithstanding the comparative superiority of the Spartan institutions

institutions in this particular, they were certainly attended with considerable defects. The division of lands was there guarded, by abolishing the use of money *, and discountenancing all commerce; regulations forced and unnatural, tending to retard all improvement, and fix the nation to that state of semi-barbarism, in which the legislator found it. Further, in order to remove the temptations to accumulate wealth, by banishing the enjoyments which usually attend it, as well as to promote the hardihood of his people, the Spartan legislator established public tables, where all the citizens fed in common, on homely food; and he wrested children from the mild superintendence of parental care, and placed them under a system of public education and rigorous discipline. These regulations produced, undoubtedly, the effect he designed; they formed a hardy multitude of citizens, who regarded the state as their common parent, and considered each other as equals. But they also tended to weaken all domestic attachments and domestic virtues; parental fondness and authority, filial love and obedience, fraternal affection, and all the amiable charities of domestic life, could have little place in such a system. But this was not yet the worst. What might have been most reasonably expected as a necessary effect of an Agrarian Law, seems

* Vide Plutarch in Lycurgus, and Polybius, Lib. VI. Vide also Montague on the Rise and Fall of the ancient Republics, ch. i.

seems to be, a race of laborious peasantry, employed in agriculture, and possessing all that simplicity, industry, and peaceable turn of mind, which such a class of men naturally acquire. But no such existed at Sparta. The citizens, who were the proprietors of the soil, disdaining agriculture, committed the care of their lands to their slaves; they were themselves excluded from commerce, they were ignorant of letters, they possessed no amusement or occupation but their public meetings and their military exercises. Unaccustomed to peaceful arts and industry, they were ambitious of no praise, but such as arms could acquire; and this circumstance gradually led to the neglect of their legislator's institutions, and the consequent destruction of their polity. In vain did Lycurgus, when he formed all the freemen into a national militia for the defence of the state, forbid all offensive wars and all distant conquests. A nation with whom war was the sole business, and the ruling passion of their lives, were too ambitious and too fierce to submit to any such restraints. They rushed into offensive wars, they extended their dominions; money was thence introduced, first for public, then for private use; luxury crept in, the Agrarian Law was violated, and the Spartan constitution overthrown.

I have thus particularly noticed the Spartan polity; because, in its great basis, the distribution of landed property, it approaches nearer than any other I know of, to the Hebrew government, which

was founded on an equal Agrarian Law. For, when the Children of Israel were numbered, immediately before their entrance into the promised land, and found (exclusive of the Levites) to exceed six hundred thousand men, the Lord said unto Moses, "Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to the few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers shall they inherit*."

By this regulation, provision was made for the support of six hundred thousand yeomanry †, with from six to twenty-five acres of land each ‡. This land they held independent of all temporal superiors, by direct tenure from the Lord Jehovah, their Sovereign, by whose power they were to acquire their territory, and under whose protection only they could retain it. On this principle, the lands so distributed were unalienable: "The land shall not be sold for ever," says the Law; "for the land is mine

* Numbers, xxvi. 53, &c.

† Numbers, xxvi. 51. and xxxiii. 54.

‡ Vide Lowman on the Hebrew Government, ch. iv.—Vide also Cunæus de Republica Hebræorum, cap ii.; De Lege Agraria, et inæstimabili ejus Utilitate; and Leydeker de Republica Hebræorum, Lib. V. cap. xi. xii. xiii.; and the Universal History, Vol. I. p. 617.

"mine saith the Lord: ye are strangers and so-"journers with me *."

Thus the basis of the Hebrew constitution was an equal Agrarian Law. But this Law was guarded by other provisions most wise and salutary. The accumulation of debt was prevented, first by prohibiting every Jew from accepting of interest † from any of his fellow-citizens; next, by establishing a regular release of all debts every seventh year; and finally, by ordaining that no lands could be alienated for ever, but must, on each year of jubilee, or seventh sabbatic year, revert to the families which originally possessed them. Thus, without absolutely depriving individuals of all temporary dominion over their landed property, it re-established, every fiftieth year, that original and equal distribution of it, which was the foundation of the national polity: and as the period of such reversion was fixed and regular, all parties had due notice of the terms on which they negotiated; there was no ground for public commotion or private complaint.

One part of the regulation respecting the release in the year of jubilee, deserves our notice: it did not extend to houses in cities; these, if not redeemed within one year after they were sold, were alienated for ever ‡. This circumstance must have given property

* Lev. xxv. 23.

† Ib. ver. 35, 36.; and see the entire chapter.

‡ Ib. ver. 29 & 30.

property in the country * a decided preference above property in cities; and induced every Jew to reside on and improve his land, and employ his time in the care of flocks, and agriculture, which, as they had been the occupation of those revered patriarchs from whom the Jews descended, were with them the most honourable of all employments †. Further, the original division of land was to the several tribes according to their families, so that each tribe was settled in the same county, and each family in the same barony or hundred. Nor was the estate of any family in one tribe permitted to pass into another, even by the marriage of an heiress ‡. So that, not only was the original balance of property preserved, but the closest and dearest connexions of affinity attached to each other the inhabitants of every vicinage. Thus domestic virtue and affection had a more extensive sphere of action: the happiness of rural life was increased, a general attention to virtue and decorum was promoted, from that natural emulation which each family would feel to preserve unsullied the reputation of their vicinage; and the poor might every where expect more ready assistance, since they implored it from men, whose sympathy in their sufferings

* Vide Jews Letters to Voltaire, Part III. Let. i. § 5, note.

† Vide Fleury on the Manners of the Israelites, ch. iii.

‡ Vide Numbers, xxvii. which directs a due portion of the inheritance of their tribe to be given to the daughters of Zelophehad, he having no sons; and Numbers, xxxvi. which directs the marriages of heiresses within their own tribe.

sufferings would be quickened by hereditary friendship and hereditary connexion.

But while the Jewish Agrarian Law secured the perpetual maintenance of a numerous, virtuous, and independent yeomanry, it did not prevent the existence of an higher rank of men, who should possess superior property and influence; a rank so essential to the subordination and tranquillity of social life. Such a rank of men had always existed amongst the Jews; we find them bearing their due part in the solemn act of allegiance by which all Israel submitted to the sovereignty of Jehovah: "Ye stand all of you this day," says the legislator, "before the Lord your God; your captains of your "tribes, your elders, and your officers, and all the "men of Israel; that you should enter into covenant "with the Lord your God*." We find repeated notice taken of the princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel; the rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, of tens, who were civil judges in lesser causes, and also entrusted with the various gradations of military command. We find twelve princes of the tribes, and fifty-eight heads of families, forming the first model of the celebrated Sanhedrim, and, by the divine appointment, sharing the authority of the legislator. The princes of the tribes presided at the original distribution of the lands; and the instance of Caleb, who obtained for his own portion the mountain

* Deut. xxix. 10.; also Numbers, i. and xi. 16, and xxxiv.

mountain of Hebron with its cities, proves they were attended to, as it was natural they should, in the distribution of the national property. And it has been proved by geographical researches, that the computation of territory which supposed a distribution of from sixteen to twenty-five acres * for each of the six hundred thousand yeomanry, still left an abundant overplus to supply the nobility and gentry with estates suitable to their rank, in an age and country where the most honourable personages employed themselves in agriculture, and, though hospitable and generous, were unacquainted with that expensive splendor and ostentatious magnificence, which consumes the revenues of provinces, in the erection of palaces, the support of equipages, and the indulgencies of luxury.

Another effect of the Mosaic Agrarian Law, which it is necessary to notice, was the invincible barrier which it opposed against all attacks of hostile violence, and all internal attempts on the freedom of the Jewish state. It appears, that every free-holder

* Vide Lowman on the Hebrew Government, ch. iii. The *lowest* computation of the extent of the land of Judæa, makes it 160 miles in length by 110 in breadth, containing 11,264,000 acres, and giving above sixteen acres to each of the 600,000 yeomen freeholders, with an overplus of 1,264,000 acres for the Levitical cities, the princes of tribes, the heads of families, and other public uses.—The authors of the Universal History state the length to have been about 70 leagues or 210 miles, the breadth about 30 leagues or 90 miles. This would give a greater extent, viz. 18,900 square miles, instead of 17,600.—Vide Universal History, Vol. I. p. 580.; and the Abbé Fleury on the Manners of the Israelites, Part II. ch. iii.

holder * was obliged to attend at the general muster of the national army, and to serve in it as long as occasion required, except only such as could plead certain specific excuses, stated by the Law, and which were formed with a wise and benevolent attention to the natural feelings, and even to the pardonable weaknesses, of the human mind. This being the condition on which all landed property was held, the Agrarian Law secured a body of six hundred thousand men enured to labour and industry, and ready to offer themselves at their country's call. And to facilitate every military array †, the princes of the tribes, the heads of families,

* Deut. xx. 5.—These directions to the officers to "speak to "the people, saying, What man is there of you, that hath built "a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and "return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man "dedicate it," &c. prove two things: First, that all were obliged to attend the summons to war, and not depart until excused by the authority of the commanders: And next, that the obligation to such attendance was not limited to the immediately approaching war on the invasion of Canaan, but was to be perpetual; for it would have been idle to talk of exempting those who had built a house and not dedicated it, or planted a vineyard and not eaten the fruits thereof, from going to war, at a time when the whole nation was collected in camp, before they had so much as entered on the land they were to settle in, and when not a single man of them (at least of nine tribes and a half) could have possessed either house or vineyard.

† Vide Lowman on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, p. 73. from comparing Exodus xviii. 21. with Numb. xxxi. 14. that the division of the people for civil purposes, was exactly the same as that for military purposes. In both cases they were divided into thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens, and the chiefs of

families, the rulers over thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens, who in peace exercised certain civil offices, united with these offices proportionable military commands, heading their respective tribes and families, and determinate portions of the militia of their vicinage. This great body of national yeomanry, in which every private landholder possessed an independent property, was commanded by men equally independent, respectable for their property, their civil authority, and, above all, their revered ancestors; and acquiring their military rank,

of these numbers are in both places expressed by the same Hebrew word, שרי; and in the Septuagint translation, the same Greek words, expressive of military command, are applied to both. It may appear an objection, that in Deut. xx. 9, it is said in our translation, "That when the officers have made "an end of speaking unto the people, they shall make captains "of the armies to lead the people." But the original Hebrew appears clearly to mean, that then the captains shall take their post, וּפָקְדוּ, at the head of the army. With which sense the Syriac version agrees; vide Biblia Waltoni. Patrick observes (without having the present question at all in contemplation) "And if we translate the words as they may be out of the "Hebrew, they shall place or set captains of the hosts in the "head or the front of the people." The rotation of 24,000 men, appointed to attend on David every month, are described so as to indicate their being arranged by this old and familiar division: 1 Chron. xxvii. 1. "Now the Children of Israel after "their number, the chief fathers and captains of thousands "and hundreds, and their officers," &c. Lowman quotes the authorities of Harrington, Sigonius, Menochius and Calmet; to which we may add Leydeker, p. 416, whose opinion is of great weight; and the authors of the Universal History, Book I. ch. vii. Vol. I. p. 701.

rank, almost by hereditary right. Such a body of men, so commanded, presented an insuperable obstacle to treacherous ambition and political intrigue, on any design to overturn the Hebrew constitution, and assume despotic power: too strong to be terrified, too opulent to be bribed, too attached to each other and to their officers to be disunited, any attempt to enslave such a people, or subvert a constitution so guarded, would have been the extremity of madness; and we may safely pronounce, no state ever existed, where the constitution was more stable, and the national liberty more perfectly secure, than amongst the Jews, while they obeyed the statutes ordained by their inspired Legislator.

Nor were these institutions less wisely adapted to secure the state against foreign violence, and at the same time prevent offensive wars and remote conquests; pursuing in this, but by means infinitely more wisely contrived, and permanently effectual, the same objects which Lycurgus afterwards attempted. He in vain prohibited from engaging in offensive wars, a people who were trained to no other business than military exercises, and sought no other distinction than military glory. Far different was the effect of the Jewish Agrarian Law; it provided indeed a hardy body of six hundred thousand yeomanry, ever ready to protect their country when assailed; but, perpetually employed as they were in agriculture, attached to domestic life,

life, enjoying the society of friends and relatives, by whom they were encircled, all war must have been to them in the highest degree wearisome and odious. Religion concurred with their mode of life, to prevent them from being captivated by the false splendour of military glory. On returning from battle, even if victorious, in order to bring them back to more peaceful feelings after the rage of war, the Law ordered that they should consider themselves as polluted by this perhaps necessary slaughter, and unworthy of thus appearing in the camp of Jehovah*; they were therefore to employ a whole day in purifying themselves, before they were admitted. Besides, their force was entirely infantry, the Law forbidding even their kings to multiply horses in their train; and the ordinance requiring the attendance of all the males three times every year at Jerusalem, proved the intention of their Legislator to confine the nation within the limits of the promised land; and rendered long and distant wars and conquests impossible, without renouncing that religion which was incorporated with their whole civil polity, the charter by which they held all their property, and enjoyed all their rights.

In the circumstances of the Jewish polity we have hitherto considered, there is some resemblance to

* Vide Numbers, ch. xix. 13 to 16.; and xxxi. 19.

to the institutions of subsequent Lawgivers; yet how decided is the superiority of the Mosaic code! But in the regulations as to the tribe of Levi, we see an object pursued, which, until Christianity was established, no Lawgiver but the Jewish thought of attending to. Ministers of religion are indeed found in every state: wherever any idol was worshipped, there must have been altars and priests, there generally were soothsayers and diviners; but such men never attempted any thing beyond the immediate performance of religious ceremonies, or employing that influence over the public mind, which their sacred functions gave them, to promote private gain, or, in some instances, political views: religious and moral instruction to the great mass of the people, they never attempted, and never desired. But the Jewish Legislator set apart the entire tribe of Levi, one-twelfth of the nation, not merely to perform the rites and sacrifices which the ritual enjoined (a purpose which I do not now particularly insist on) but to diffuse over the great mass of the people, religious and moral instruction, for which they were expressly set apart. "Of Levi," (says the Legislator, when in his last solemn hymn he sketches the characters and the fortunes of the different tribes) "Let thy Urim and thy Thummim "be with thy holy one: they have observed thy "word, and kept thy covenant; they shall teach "Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy Law; they

" shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-
" sacrifice upon thine altar *." To them was the custody of the sacred volume consigned, with the ark of the covenant; and Moses commanded the priests the sons of Levi, and the elders of Israel, " At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity " of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, " when all Israel is come to appear before the " Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose; " thou shalt read this Law before all Israel, in " their hearing †. Gather the people together, men " and women and children, and the stranger that is " within thy gates, that they may hear, and that " they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and " observe to do all the words of this Law: and " that their children which have not known any " thing, may hear and learn to fear the Lord " your God, as long as you live in the land " whither ye go to possess it ‡." This public and solemn periodical instruction, though eminently useful, was certainly not the entire of their duty; they were bound, from the spirit of this ordinance, to

* Deut. xxxiii. 8—10.

† Among the various wise reasons for choosing this period, one most principal appears to be, its being the year of release, when the general abolition of debts and discharge from personal slavery periodically took place; circumstances which would necessarily secure constant attention to this solemnity, and contribute to insure the observance of this command. Thus closely were the religious and civil parts of the Mosaic code connected.

‡ Deut. xxxi. 10—13.

to take care that at all times the aged should be improved, and the children instructed in the knowledge and the fear of God, the adoration of his majesty, and the observance of his Law: and for this purpose the peculiar situation and privileges of the tribe of Levi, as regulated by the divine appointment, admirably fitted them. Possessed of no landed property, and supported by the tithes and offerings which they received in kind, they were little occupied with labour or secular care; deriving their maintenance from a source which would necessarily fail if the worship and the Laws of God were neglected, they were deeply interested in their support. Their cities being dispersed through all the tribes * and their families permitted to intermarry with all, they were every where at hand to admonish and instruct: exclusively possessed of the high-priesthood, as well as of all other religious offices, and † associated with the high-priest and judge in the supreme court of judicature, and with the elders of every city in the inferior tribunals, and guardians of the cities of refuge where those who were guilty of homicide fled for an asylum, they must have acquired such influence and reverence amongst the people, as were necessary to secure attention to their instructions: and they were led to study the rules of moral conduct, the principles of equity, and, above all, the Mosaic code, with unceasing attention: but they were not laid under any vows

* Numbers xxxv. † Deut. xvii. 9. and xxiv. 8.

vows of celibacy, or monastic austerity and retirement, and thus abstracted from the intercourse and the feelings of social life. Thus circumstanced, they were assuredly well calculated to answer the purpose of their institution, to preserve and consolidate the union of all the other tribes, to instruct and forward the Jews in knowledge, virtue and piety; "To "teach Jacob the judgments, and Israel the Law "of Jehovah;" that they might hear and fear, "and "learn to obey the will of their Sovereign and their "God." And, as no more important object could be aimed at by any Lawgiver, so the almost total neglect of other legislators in this respect, and the caution and wisdom of the Jewish institutions for this purpose, seem to supply one important presumptive argument for the divine original of the Mosaic code.

Hitherto we have considered the Jewish Law, chiefly as it secured the rights, and promoted the happiness, of the higher and middling classes of society; the nobility and gentry, the Levites, and the great mass of the Jewish yeomanry or freemen *. But the Mosaic Law extended its parental care to the very lowest classes, the stranger and the slave, the poor, the fatherless and the widow. These it represents as the peculiar objects of the divine care, and

* Vide the Jewish Letters, Part III. Letter iv. Universal History, B. I. ch. vii. sect. 4, on the Laws relating to the sabbatic and jubilee years, p. 613 & 617.

and denounces against any injury to them, peculiar indignation and punishment from God. "If a "stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall "not vex him; but the stranger that dwelleth "among you shall be unto you as one born among "you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye "were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the "Lord thy God *." "The tithes of the third year "thou shalt give to the Levite, the stranger, the "fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat "within thy gates, and be filled †."

That part of the Hebrew constitution which forbad the acceptance of interest ‡ from a fellow-citizen, and established a septennial abolition of debts, and a periodical restitution of all lands which had been alienated from their original proprietors, though necessary for the general balance and security of the Hebrew government, might yet have operated to increase in some instances the pressure of poverty, by rendering it more difficult to obtain immediate relief. It is therefore important to observe, how anxiously the Legislator guards against any such effect from these regulations. "If there "be among you," says the Law, "a poor man, "one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in "the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, "thou

* Lev. xix. 33 & 34. † Deut. xxvi. 12.

‡ Interest from any one not a fellow-citizen, was permitted, but subject to the limitation of using him with the strictest regard to equity and benevolence, which the passages quoted in the last paragraph require.

"thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine "hand from thy poor brother. Nor let there be a "thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh "year, the year of release is at hand; and thine "eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou "givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord "against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou "shalt surely give, and thine heart shall not be "grieved when thou givest unto him; because that "for this thing the Lord thy God will bless thee in "all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the "poor shall never cease out of thy land: therefore "I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine "hand wide to thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy "needy, in thy land *."

With equal energy does the Law maintain the cause of the hired labourer: "Thou shalt not "oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, "whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers "that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day "thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun "go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his "heart upon it; lest he cry unto the Lord, and it "be sin unto thee †."

Thus, also, how are the feelings as well as the wants of the poor consulted, in that precept which directed, "When thou dost lend thy brother any "thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch "his

* Deut. xv. 7—11. † Ib. xxiv. ver. 14 & 15.

" his pledge * :" as if the legislator said, Intrude not into his abode, if he is not willing to expose to the stranger's eye the humiliating circumstances of want and nakedness which attend his destitute state; or perhaps there is some little monument of his better days, which he reserves to console his misery, which he would not wish the person from whom he implores aid to see, lest he should demand that in pledge, and either, if denied, refuse relief, or, by tearing away this almost sacred relic to which his heart clings, embitter his distress. No, says the Law, the hovel of the poor must be sacred as an holy asylum: the eye of scorn and the foot of pride must not dare to intrude: even the agent of mercy must not enter it abruptly and unbid, without consulting the feelings of its wretched inhabitant. " Thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his " pledge; thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to " whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge " abroad unto thee †."

In the same strain of humanity the Law goes on: " If the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his " pledge. In any case thou shalt deliver him the " pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he " may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: " and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the " Lord thy God ‡."

The

* Deut. xxiv. 10. † Ib. ver. 11.
‡ Ib ver. 12 & 13.

The same spirit of benevolence was to regulate the conduct and soften the heart of the husbandman in all his labours. "If thou cuttest down the "harvest of thy field," says the Law, "and hast "forgot a sheaf, thou shalt not turn again to fetch "it: if thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not "go over the boughs again: when thou gatherest "thy grapes, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it "shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the "widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee "in all the work of thy hands*." With equal solicitude does the Law impress reverence for the authority, and attention to the wants of the aged, delivering as the direct command of Jehovah: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and "honour the face of the old man, and fear thy "God: I am the Lord†." How much praise have the Spartan institutions justly obtained, for cherishing this principle; yet how much more energetic and authoritative is the language of the Jewish Lawgiver. With a similar spirit the same Lawgiver inculcates in the strongest manner the duty of shewing tenderness to those who labour under any bodily infirmity: "Thou shalt not curse "the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the "blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord‡." And with a still more exalted sense of the importance of virtue above every external advantage, and the proportionable

* Deut. xxiv. 19—21. † Levit. xix. 32.
‡ Levit. xix. 14.

proportionable obligation of promoting it in all with whom we have any intercourse, the inspired Lawgiver considers the neglecting to do so, as a proof of criminal malignity: "Thou shalt not hate "thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise "*rebuke* thy *neighbour, and not suffer sin upon* him. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge "against the children of thy people, but thou shalt "love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord*." How admirably are such language and such sentiments as these suited to the sacred original from whence they are supposed to flow! How strongly do they attest the divine benevolence, which dictated the Jewish Law, and the divine authority, which alone could enforce such precepts by adequate sanctions, and impress such sentiments upon the human heart with practical conviction! If the intermixture of such sentiments and precepts with the civil code, and the union of political regulations with moral instruction and religious observances, is unparalleled in any other country, and by any other Lawgiver—does not this circumstance afford some presumptive evidence of the divine original of the Mosaic code?

TO REVIEW THE SKETCH WE HAVE EXHIBITED OF THE JEWISH CONSTITUTION, we have seen that it provided for the settlement of 600,000 freeholders, with independent properties, derived not from any human superior, but held in fee from the Sovereign of

* Levit. xix. 17 & 18.

of the Jewish state, even God himself. This distribution of property was guarded by preventing the accumulation of debt, and, if alienated for a time, "having its reversion to the family of the original "forgetor, at regular periods. The distribution of "it: [illegible]y of freeholders through the land, by their [illegible] and families, forms an additional provision for their union and happiness. They are employed in agriculture, attached to domestic life, estranged from war, but bound to assemble for their country's defence, and thus forming a secure barrier against hostile violence or insidious ambition. They are governed by a nobility, by magistrates and by elders, possessing properties suited to their several ranks, respected for their patriarchal descent, uniting in their persons civil and military authority, by an hereditary right which precluded jealousy and discord. The whole tribe of Levi is set apart to attend to the religious and moral instruction of the nation, for which they have the fullest leisure, and to which they are bound by the strongest interests; dispersed over the whole, and forming a cement and bond of union between the remaining tribes. In this domestic and family government, as it has been justly termed, population is encouraged—freedom secured—agriculture, and residence in the country, and, by consequence, purity and simplicity of manners, provided for—domestic virtue, reverence to the aged, kindness to the stranger, bounty to the fatherless and the widow, justice to all, are inculcated in the most

most forcible manner, and with the most awful sanctions, even the favour or the displeasure of the Lord Jehovah, who is the immediate Sovereign under whom this government is exercised, by whom its Laws are formed, from whom all property is held, to whose powerful interposition the nation owed its settlement, and on whose protection it depended for its continuance. All the blessings therefore which the Jew enjoyed under this constitution, and by this government, ought to have had the effect of animating his gratitude and piety to God, and enlarging his benevolence to the poor and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, those peculiar objects of the divine patronage and protection. Is not such a scheme of government worthy of the divine Author to which it is ascribed? and does not its establishment at so early a period, and amongst a people so apparently incapable of inventing it as the Jews, strongly attest its heavenly original?

PART II.

LECTURE V.

ORIGINALITY AND DESIGN OF THE JEWISH RITUAL.

LECTURE V.

IMPORTANCE of the question, Whether the Jewish Ritual is opposed to the system of heathen worship, or in any degree borrowed from it?—The latter improbable, if Judaism is of divine original—Spencer's opinion—grounded on supposed political wisdom of such a proceeding—Examples he adduces—mistaken as to these examples—as to reformation from Judaism to Christianity—and from Gentilism to Christianity—Attempt to accommodate Christianity to pre-existing customs, &c.—its mischiefs—Reformation from Popery to Protestantism—Spencer's opinion contrary to Scripture—Parts of the Jewish Ritual more ancient than Moses—Origin of circumcision—Designed contrast between Judaism and idolatry—Jewish Ritual a barrier against idolatry, proved by experience—Josephus—Tacitus—Spencer's opinion supported by insufficient evidence—How far Judaism resembled idolatry—Instances of contrast—Minuteness of Ritual, how useful—and its sanctuary, priests, &c.—Ritual not burthensome.

PART II.

LECT. V.

ORIGINALITY AND DESIGN OF THE JEWISH RITUAL.

IN the preceding Lectures an attempt has been made to contrast the theological, moral, and political principles of the Mosaic Law, with the idolatries and corruptions almost universally prevalent at the period of its promulgation, as well as with the carnal temper and short-sighted views of the Jewish people, and their proneness to imitate the worship and sink into the corruptions of their idolatrous neighbours. And it has been inferred, that the establishment of such a system, at such a period, amongst a people so apparently incapable of inventing it, as the Jews, and so evidently unwilling to submit to it, strongly attests its heavenly original.—In the prosecution of this argument, I did not judge it necessary minutely to examine a question which has been agitated by Writers of considerable note,—How far the apparent resemblance between certain parts of the Jewish Ritual and certain practices of the Egyptians and other idolatrous nations, should induce a doubt of the

originality of the Jewish Law, and lead us to believe that the Legislator of the Hebrews borrowed many of his rites from the practice of the Egyptians, and others of the surrounding nations, in order to accommodate his Ritual to the habits and propensities of his countrymen, by preserving a similarity between his institutions and those idolatrous rites and customs to which they had been familiarized and attached; many of which he in a great measure retained (as these writers suppose) only altering them so far as to change their object, appropriating them to the service of the true God, and blending them with the rites which originated solely in the divine appointment. Some judicious and candid Critics have considered my omitting to notice this question, as a defect in this Work; and in deference to their judgment, I feel myself called on to advert to it as far as I judge it necessary in my present view of the subject.

In the first place, then, if the principles and reasonings adduced in the preceding Lectures, and confirmed in those which follow, are just and conclusive, the supposition which we are now considering, becomes totally superfluous, and even in the highest degree improbable. If the great Jehovah, the moral Governor of the world, did in reality separate the Jewish nation to be the depositaries of true religion and sound morality, in the midst of an idolatrous world, and for this purpose brought them forth out of Egypt by a series of stupendous

dous and uncontrolled miracles; if he promulgated to them the Moral Law of the Decalogue, with the most awful display of divine power and majesty; if he established over them, as their form of national government, a Theocracy, which could not be supported without the continued interposition of an extraordinary providence; if he retained them in the Wilderness for forty years, to discipline and instruct them, until the entire generation, which had been familiarized to the idolatry and corruptions of Egypt, had perished; and if he then planted them in the Land of Canaan by a supernatural power, driving out before them its inhabitants, or compelling the Jews to exterminate them, as a punishment for their inveterate idolatry and its attendant crimes, commanding them carefully to avoid all similar profanation and guilt, under the terror of suffering similar punishment;—if these facts have been established, so as to prove that the Jewish Lawgiver was clearly delegated by God to institute a particular form of worship, with a variety of regulations and rites, to preserve the separation of this chosen people from the surrounding nations;—then the supposition, that he should borrow any thing from these rites and customs, in order to accommodate his system to the prejudices, habits, and propensities of his countrymen, becomes unnecessary, in proportion as we more clearly discern that he possessed authority to conciliate attention and enforce obedience without resorting

to any such artifice. And if such an expedient was unnecessary, surely its adoption is extremely improbable. Thus to blend divine appointments and human inventions; to degrade the worship of the great Jehovah with the intermixture of rites originally designed to honour the basest idols; to reprobate the whole system of idolatry, all its profanations and crimes, with the most vehement and indiscriminate condemnation, and prohibit every attempt to introduce any part of it under the severest penalties; and yet secretly, as it were, pilfer from it some of its most attractive charms, varnish them with a new colouring, and exhibit them as the genuine features of true religion; this seems altogether irreconcileable with the dignity of an inspired Legislator and the purity of a divine Law, and indeed forms a scheme so jarring and inconsistent, that it appears utterly incredible it should be adopted by Divine Wisdom.

The learned * Spencer, the most distinguished champion for this opinion, of the rites of the Jewish Law having been borrowed from those of the Gentiles, especially the Egyptians, argues from the political wisdom of such a gradual reformation, by grafting new institutions on customs already familiarized; and he adduces examples from "the triple "reformation, first from Judaism to Christianity; "next from Gentilism to Christianity; and lastly, "from

* Spencer de Legibus Hebræorum, Lib. III. Hagæ Comitum A. D. 1686.

"from Popery to Protestantism: in each of which "(as he truly alleges) many instances occur, in which "the rites of the old religion were retained or "imitated in the new *." But in this reasoning he seems entirely to overlook the real bearing of the very examples he adduces. Christianity borrowed from Judaism, because it was the completion of that system which in Judaism had been begun. Christ came, "not to destroy the Law and the prophets, "but to fulfil them †." Hence the moral precepts of the Old Testament were preserved and perfected in the New; the rites and ceremonies of the Law were typical of the grand events and leading truths of the Gospel; and the chief festivals of the Jewish church were succeeded and superseded by corresponding festivals in the Christian. But the moment that human prejudice in favour of ancient usages would have overstepped the bounds prescribed by scriptural truth, and obtruded upon Christians the observances of a national and ceremonial Law, inconsistent with the character of a universal religion and a purely spiritual worship, that moment Divine Wisdom interposed its direct prohibition against an abuse so mistaken and so mischievous ‡. And can we suppose the same wisdom would have acted so opposite a part at the establishment of the Jewish Law, as to permit this

* Spencer, ut supra, Lib. III. cap. ii. sect. 4. p. 27.

† Matt. v. 17. ‡ Acts, x. xi. & xv.

this chosen people to receive by divine appointment a Ritual, which, by its similarity to idolatrous rites, could scarcely fail to make them regard such profanations with respect, and throw in their way a most seductive temptation to imitate them more extensively?—Human policy, shortsighted in its views and defective in its authority, might, to facilitate its immediate objects, find it necessary to employ an expedient attended with so much future hazard; but surely this were unworthy of a divine Lawgiver.

The second example appealed to by Spencer—the reformation from Gentilism to Christianity, as conducted by the well meaning, but weak and mistaken men, who influenced the proceedings of the western church in the fifth and sixth centuries, exhibits a memorable and melancholy instance of the corruptions originating from thus preferring the crooked artifices of human policy, to the plain dictates of divine truth. From what other source than this were derived the errors and idolatries adopted and sanctioned by the church of Rome *? which for so many ages obscured and disgraced the whole system of the Christian faith, till the wise and manly zeal of the Protestant Reformers tore off this disfiguring mask of Paganism, and again exhibited the unadulterated beauties of genuine Christianity, to attract the admiration and command the reverence

* Vide Middleton's Comparison of Popery and Paganism, 4th edit. Lond. 1741.

rence of mankind.—But, says Spencer *, even in this reformation, many of the principles and usages of the Romish church were retained, and the progress of that reformation thus accelerated. True; the Christian world will always remember with gratitude, that though the Roman church introduced many most injurious innovations, and loaded Christianity with a multitude of errors and superstitions, still she preserved all the great truths of the Gospel, and handed down to posterity many of the most valuable rites and usages of antiquity. These therefore it became the duty and the wisdom of the Reformers to retain, and only to reject those novelties and corruptions which artifice and superstition had introduced. And admirably indeed did the venerable Founders of the Church of England execute this important discrimination. But they succeeded, because they made it their object to clear the divine Law from all intermixture of human depravation; not, as Spencer supposes of the inspired Lawgiver of the Jews, to debase the divine institutions to the level of idolatrous profanations.

But if the patrons of this system cannot defend it, as being evidently reasonable and useful, and recommended by examples of sufficient authority; still less can they support it by the authority of Scripture. Its greatest advocate indeed acknowledges, "It is no where in Scripture asserted in "express

* Ut supra, Lib. III. cap. iii. sect. 4. p. 27.

"express words, that the rites used among the "Heathens gave occasion to any of the Jewish in-"stitutions." He adds this reason for such silence; "perhaps because this circumstance could easily be "discerned by men of more penetrating sagacity; "or because, if God had openly declared this "origin and reason of the Mosaic Laws, they would "have fallen into contempt with the vulgar part of "mankind, who are wont to despise what is plain "and revere only what is mystical and obscure*." It is obvious to mark how inconsistent this observation is with the general scheme of this writer. The sole purpose of such imitation of heathen rites, is supposed to be its tendency to attach the multitude by the adoption of customs to which they were already familiarized. Could it produce this effect, if it was not discernible by that multitude? or if discerned, it would expose the law to contempt. Or could the similarity be obvious, and the design to imitate unseen? Spencer however affirms, that, though it is not directly asserted, it is not obscurely intimated by some passages of Holy Writ; and at the head of these he places the sublime appeal of the Jewish Lawgiver to his people:— "What nation is there so great, that hath God so "nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all "things that we call upon him for? And what "nation is there so great, that hath statutes and "judgments so righteous, as all this Law which "I set

* Spencer, Lib. III. cap. i. initio.

"I set before you this day*?"—"In this passage," says this learned writer, "Moses, in order to attach "the Jews to God and his institutions, may be "considered as thus addressing them—I know that "you earnestly desire a God, not hid in clouds "or removed to a distance from you, and to be "perceived only by the mind's eye, but a God who "may prove his presence by prodigies, oracles, and "illustrious signs, and almost exhibit himself to "your sight. I know that you look with a desiring "eye on the manners and sacred rites of other "nations, and that nothing can be more grateful to "you, than that you, like other nations, should "have a religion full of rites and observances. And "assuredly God has proved so compliant and in-"dulgent to your desires and wishes, that I now "confidently ask you, What nation is there which "hath its gods so near, or exhibiting to their "worshippers such illustrious proofs of their pre-"sence and their favour? And if you view the "institutions of foreign nations, learn, even such "of you as regard with the greatest partiality and "attachment the rites of other religions, what nation "is there which celebrates the worship of the Divi-"nity with rites so conspicuous for purity, dignity "and splendour; for we do not worship the supreme "and glorious God with that barbarous mixture of "ceremonies, in which the ignorance and superstition "of the Heathens had combined so many things "ridiculous

* Deut. iv. 7 & 8.

"ridiculous and impure, but with rites amended, "and that have undergone the correction of the "most wise God, which are yet retained in the "worship of the Heathens entire and without any "correction." The latter part of this paraphrase, containing the peculiarity of this Author's opinion (which I cannot but deem erroneous) assuredly receives no support from the passage of Scripture on which he here attempts to found it. Indeed were I to select a passage decidedly contrasting the whole Mosaic Law with the religions of every surrounding nation, it would be the entire chapter from whence this is selected. With what energy does the inspired Lawgiver warn his countrymen to hearken to the statutes of their God, statutes which they were not to presume in the least degree to alter—"Ye shall not add unto the word which I "command you, neither shall ye diminish aught "from it, that ye may keep the commandments of "the Lord your God *." With what solemnity does he caution them against the impure and seductive profanation of Baal-Peor, which had already brought down upon them the wrath of God †;—against the use of every graven image, as a similitude of the Divinity ‡;—against the adoration of the sun and moon, and host of heaven §, which at that period was so universal in a deluded world. How incredible is it, that while every principle and species

* Deut. iv. 2.
† Ib. ver. 3.
‡ Ib. ver. 16.
§ Ib. ver. 19.

species of idolatry is thus reprobated and condemned, any practices or ceremonies of that very idolatry should be adopted and consecrated in the worship of the great Jehovah. The more we examine the Mosaic institutions, the more strikingly conspicuous do the characters of originality and designed contrast to the principles and rites of idolatry appear; as far at least as I can investigate or judge of them. It is true, some parts of the Jewish religion derived their origin from an authority more ancient than that of Moses: the observance of the sabbath appears to have been coeval with the creation, and the use of sacrifice to have been instituted by God immediately after the Fall *: These, therefore, it is perfectly natural to suppose had been received by other nations from the remotest antiquity, and when adopted into the Mosaic institutions, it was only requisite to free them from the superstitions and corruptions with which they had been blended, restore them to their original purity, and direct them to their true object. The rite of circumcision had been the peculiar seal of the covenant with Abraham, had been given four hundred years before the Mosaic Law, had been received by all the numerous descendants of that illustrious patriarch, and may have been recommended even to others, who were not his descendants,

* Vide Gen. iii. 21. and iv. 3 & 4.; and on this subject Dr. Magee's very able and learned Work on Atonement and Sacrifice, Disc. II. with the proofs and illustrations, 2d edit. Dubl. 1809.

ants, by the fame of his wisdom and sanctity, and his distinguished prosperity and success. But to suppose, as has been argued*, that it was not to him an original and peculiar divine appointment, is to reject equally probability and Scripture. How could it have been given as the token of the covenant newly established by God with the patriarch, if it had been long in use with nations excluded from that covenant? Why provide that every stranger should submit to this rite, in order to be naturalized amongst the Hebrews, if it were already in use amongst a multitude of strangers? In short, the supposition is utterly unfounded and untenable. But its defenders allege, that circumcision was in use amongst the priests of Egypt; and affirm that they were too proud to borrow it from any other people, much less from a nation of slaves†. We may answer, that there were two periods when the pride of the Egyptians may easily have been induced to borrow this rite even from the Hebrews; the first, during the exaltation of Joseph, who intermarried with the family of the priests of the supreme Egyptian deity, On, and the adoption of whose religious principles was so strongly recommended

* Vide these arguments, collected and compared with those supporting the opposite opinion, by Spencer, Lib. I. cap. iv. sect. 4.—On this point, Spencer, though supporting the opinion, that Abraham first received this rite from a divine appointment, Lib. I. cap. iv. sect. 2. initio, with what appear to me decisive proofs, yet declines giving any positive determination of his own.

† Spencer, Lib. I. cap. iv. p. 31.

mended by the hope of thus sharing his distinguished power of penetrating into the secrets of futurity;—and again, when the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, closing the series of sufferings which had nearly destroyed Egypt, may have easily induced the terrified survivors to attempt averting the wrath of the all-powerful and victorious God of the Hebrews, by adopting, as an honorary badge of their priesthood, the seal of his followers. Surely this or almost any mode of accounting for the Egyptians having adopted this rite, is more probable than that the great Jehovah should borrow from idolaters such a practice (as circumcision) to form the right of admission into his church, and the distinguishing characteristic of his worshippers.

In truth, the whole tenor of the Jewish Law exhibits not a studied imitation, but a studied opposition to the principles and rites of idolatry. That law required the worship of the one true God exclusively; idolatry worshipped a rabble of deities. The Law proscribed all use of images, or resemblances of any creature, as emblems of the Divinity; idolatry multiplied them. The Law abhorred and condemned all impure rites and all human sacrifices; idolatry too frequently employed them. The Law forbad all necromancy and divination *; it made no use of the inspection of the entrails of victims, or the observation of the flight of birds, to discover future

* Deut. xviii. 9.—12.

future events; it relied for this, when necessary, on the divine oracle consulted by public authority, and answering from the sanctuary, when the divine glory was displayed, by a distinct and audible voice*. The Law forbad a variety of practices, in themselves apparently innocent, but which we know were employed in the superstitions of idolatry; such as worshipping in high places or in consecrated groves.

Thus

* During the life of Moses, the oracle answered by a distinct and audible voice; Vide Numbers, vii. 89. Joshua was to stand before the High Priest, who was to "ask counsel for him by the judgment of Urim before the Lord," Numb. xxvii. 21. —Interpreters have differed in explaining this passage; to me it appears to mean, that the High Priest was to put on his sacred robe whenever he was to consult the oracle, as it would be criminal to enter the sanctuary, except he was thus robed. The distinguishing ornament of this robe was the breastplate, containing the Urim and Thummim; that is, as I conceive, the twelve precious stones containing the names of the twelve tribes, as whose representative the High Priest appeared when thus consulting on some question of a national concern: when so consulting, he appears to have been accompanied by the supreme judge, at whose instance the oracle was resorted to; and it appears to me the response was delivered by an audible voice.—Compare Exod. xxviii. from ver. 15. to the end, with Exod. xxxix. 8 to 22; Levit. viii. 8. Compare also 1 Samuel, xxiii. 9 to 12. and xxx. 7.; 2 Samuel, v. 23.; also Judges, i. 1. and the entire ch. xx.—See on this subject, Lowman on the Hebrew Govern. ch. xi.; Spencer, Lib. III. Dissert. vii. de Urim & Thummim, particularly the 2d section. In his opinions on this subject, Spencer has adopted an hypothesis as to the nature of the Urim and Thummim, which appears to me most contrary to truth and Scripture, and to be fully confuted by Witsius in his Ægyptiaca, Lib. II. cap. x. xi. xii. Lib. III. cap. xi.

Thus Maimonides * notices that the prohibition against rounding the corners of the hair on the head and the beard † was given because the idolatrous priests were accustomed to use that particular tonsure. He assigns a similar reason for not making a garment of linen and woollen mixed together ‡, this being a particular dress in idolatrous rites. Hence also he accounts for the prohibition against eating the fruits of the trees they should find in the land of Canaan for three years §, which by the planters had been consecrated to idols. Thus also idolaters were brought to believe that it was acceptable to their gods to sow the ground on particular occasions with certain mixtures of seeds, which was therefore prohibited ‖. Idolaters were accustomed to use blood in consulting the dead, to consecrate bats ¶ and mice and other insects as a sacrifice to the sun; these therefore were pronounced unclean. Indeed Spencer ** has himself distinctly shewn that many of those precepts which at first view might appear trivial or irrational, were indispensably necessary to check the idolatry of the Sabeans,

* Vide Maimonides More Nevochim, Pars III. cap. xli. p. 463.; and for others, cap. xxxvii. p. 447.

† Lev. xix. 27. ‡ Ib. ver. 19.

§ Ib. ver. 23. ‖ Ib. ver. 19.

¶ Lev. xi.—Vide also Patrick on Lev. xi. 19. Deut. xiv. and the corresponding passages.

** Vide Spencer, Lib. I. from ch. v. to xi. and the entire 2d Book.—Consult also Lowman on the Hebrew Ritual, Part I. ch. ii. pp. 34. 44. & 45. and ch. iii. p. 53. with Part II. ch. iii. iv. & v.

Sabeans, who worshipped the sun and moon and stars; and it is abundantly evident that all the peculiarities of the Ritual, as to its rites, sacrifices and purifications, and its distinctions between things clean and unclean, contributed to guard against the infection of idolatry; not only by an opposition of rites and sacrifices, which would make the worshippers of Jehovah regard with habitual horror and contempt the rites and sacrifices of idolaters, but by establishing a similar opposition even in the customs of common life, and the use of even daily food, which should render all familiar intercourse between the peculiar people of Jehovah and idolaters impracticable. This effect really followed wherever these precepts of the Law were observed. Thus according to Josephus *, when the Midianite women are represented as conferring with the young men whom their beauty had captivated, stating their fears of being forsaken by their lovers, and receiving their assurances of attachment, they go on, "If "then," said they, "this be your resolution, not to "forsake us, since you make use of such customs "and conduct of life as are entirely different from "all other men, insomuch that your kinds of food "are peculiar to yourselves, and your kinds of drink "not common to others, it will be absolutely "necessary, if you would have us for your wives, "that you worship our gods; nor can there be any "other demonstration of the kindness which you "say

* Joseph. Antiq. B. IV. ch. vi. sect. 8.

"say you already have and promise to have here-
"after for us, than this, that you worship the same
"gods that we do. For has any one reason to com-
"plain that, now you are come into this country,
"you should worship the proper gods of the same
"country, especially while our gods are common
"to all men, and yours such as belong to nobody
"else but yourselves? So they said they must
"either come into such methods of worship as all
"others came into, or else they must look out for
"another world, wherein they may live by them-
"selves according to their own laws." The same feeling of aversion and contempt from this studied opposition, not only in religious rites but in the customs of common life, was universal amongst the heathens towards the Jews. Tacitus*, in his eloquent but ignorant and gross misrepresentation of their origin and manners, expresses it strongly: "Moses" (says he) "that he might attach the "nation for ever to himself, introduced rites new "and in opposition to the rest of mankind: all "things we hold sacred, are there profane; and "what we deem abominable, are with them per-"mitted." And again, "they slaughter the ram "in sacrifice, as if in contempt of Ammon; and "they also offer up an ox, which the Egyptians "worship under the name of Apis." The decided feeling of opposition and hostility which the whole Jewish

* Historiarum, Lib. V. sect. 4.

Jewish system excited, not merely in the vulgar, but in the most enlightened heathens, is evident in the passage already quoted from this philosophic historian: and still more in those which follow, where he terms their "rites perverse and polluted;" and while he remarks the good faith and benevolence for which they were noted in their intercourse with each other, charges them "with "an hostile hatred towards the rest of mankind,"— and declares that "those who adopt their principles "and customs, not only use circumcision, but are "taught to despise their own gods, to renounce "their country, and to hold in contempt brothers, "children, parents." And though he observes a similitude between the Jewish ideas of a future state, and the Egyptian opinions, he gives this noble testimony of the superiority of the Jewish theology: "With regard to the gods (says he) their opinions "are directly opposite: the Egyptians set up and "adore a number of animals and graven images; "the Jews conceive the Divinity as one, and to be "understood only by the mind: they deem those "profane, who form any images of the gods, of "perishable materials and after the likeness of men: "the Divinity they describe as supreme, eternal, "unchangeable, imperishable; hence there are no "images in their cities or their temples: with "these they would not flatter kings or honour "Cæsars." How illustrious this testimony; how strange that this sagacious historian could not perceive

perceive how grossly he contradicted himself, when, notwithstanding this, he countenanced the vulgar calumny of an ass's head, having been found in the most holy place; and when afterwards, comparing the Jewish rites with those of Bacchus, he speaks of these as festive and cheerful, while he brands the religion of the Jews as sordid and absurd. So necessary was the authority of an acknowledged Revelation to give the truths of religion, even amongst the most enlightened heathens, their due weight and practical influence; and so decided was the contrast between not only the general principles of Judaism and idolatry, but also the particular rites of each—a contrast by which the Jewish Ritual so effectually contributed to the end for which it was originally designed, even to serve as a partition-wall to separate the chosen people of God from the surrounding nations, and form a barrier against the corruptions of heathenism—a purpose with which the supposition, that it borrowed and consecrated many of these rites and practices, appears to be entirely inconsistent.

The evidence on which this supposition is founded, has been proved to be as inconclusive as the supposition itself appears to be improbable.—Witsius * has

* Witsii Ægyptiaca, Lib. III. cap. i.; this examines the credibility of the authors relied upon by Spencer, cap. ii. iii. iv. & v.; adduces the testimony of antiquity in proof that Heathenism

has shewn, with a clearness which renders it altogether unnecessary to discuss the subject afresh, that the authors on whose testimony the superior antiquity of the Egyptian religion has been maintained, and who have asserted or supposed that the Mosaic Law derived from this source many of its principles and rites, lived so long after the facts, were so grossly ignorant of the Jewish history and system, so rash or so prejudiced, that their testimony can have no authority to obtain credit, not merely, as he expresses it, with a strict investigator of antiquity, but "even with any man of plain sense and moderate erudition *." In truth, the fancied resemblance between the rites of Judaism and idolatry amounts to little more than this, that in both were priests, temples, altars, sacrifices, festivals, calculated to catch the attention, captivate the senses, and engage the imaginations of the worshippers by their splendour or their solemnity. But we have sufficiently proved that these were all directed to opposite objects of worship, the former to the one supreme God, the latter to the basest idols; and as the objects of worship, so the rites employed, we have seen, were designedly contrasted, and, so far from imitating idolatrous practices, any thing similar to such was strictly forbidden, even in particulars of

Heathenism borrowed Judaism, not Judaism from Heathenism; which he establishes in a variety of instances, and by very strong proofs.

* Witsius, Lib. III. cap. i. sect. 2.

of themselves clearly innocent, as in worshipping in groves or on high places.

Should it be asked, Why should an inspired Lawgiver, instead of a simple and purely spiritual worship, adopt a Ritual, thus, in the variety and the splendour attending it, bearing even a remote resemblance to the more gross inventions of idolatry? it may be answered, that the Jewish Ritual, with its temple, its festivals, its priests, its sacrifices, its distinctions of food, its purifications, &c. &c. not only served as a barrier against idolatry, but contributed to give the true religion dignity and attraction in the estimation both of strangers and of the Jews themselves: it marked out the Hebrew nation as a holy people, a nation of priests to Jehovah their God and King; it attached them to their religion by the habitual association of festive rites, of national exaltation and prosperity; it engaged their imagination and their senses, made them feel the necessity of circumspection and purity when they approached the presence of God, and by all these means formed some counterpoise to the seductions of idolatry. On this subject Josephus well observes *, "All our actions and studies, and all "our words, in Moses's settlement, have a reference "to piety towards God; for he hath left none of "these things in suspense or undetermined. For "there are two sorts of ways of coming at any "kind

* Joseph. contra Apion. Lib. II. sect. 17 & 18.

" kind of learning and a moral conduct of life; the
" one is by instruction in words, the other by
" practical exercises." He then observes, "the
" Lacedæmonians and Cretans taught by practical
" exercise, and not by words; that the Athenians
" and the other Grecians made laws, but had no
" regard to exercising them in practice. But for
" our legislator (says he) he very carefully joined
" these two methods of instruction together, for he
" neither left these practical exercises to go on
" without verbal instruction, nor did he permit the
" hearing of the Law to proceed without the
" exercises for practice; but beginning immediately
" from the earliest infancy, and the appointment of
" every one's diet, he left nothing of the smallest
" consequence to be done at the pleasure and
" disposal of the person himself. Accordingly he
" made a fixed rule of Law, what sorts of food they
" should abstain from, and what they should make
" use of; as also, what communion they should
" have with others, what great diligence they should
" use in their occupations, and what times of rest
" should be interposed, &c. And he demonstrated
" the Law to be the best and the most necessary
" instruction of all others, permitting the people to
" leave off their other employments, and to assemble
" together for the hearing of the Law, and learning
" it exactly; and this not once or twice, or oftener,
" but every week; which thing all the other legis-
" lators seem to have neglected." It is further to

be remarked, that the appointment of the tabernacles first, and of the temple afterwards, as the sanctuary where Jehovah, the God and King of Israel would manifest his presence by a visible display of his glory, and give answers to the public and solemn applications, made through the high-priest, to discover the will of this the supreme Sovereign of the Hebrew nation, gave rise to many peculiarities of the Jewish Ritual. Hence the solemn worship of the whole church was to be directed to that place where Jehovah dwelt; and it was therefore declared unlawful, by this Ritual, to have any altar, or to offer any sacrifice, but before this presence, in honour of which the Ritual appoints the magnificence of the temple, of the holy and most holy place, and the religious respect with which they were to be approached. For the same reason the Ritual appoints so many priests as servants to attend on the presence, and to minister before the Lord Jehovah, who were to be invested in their sacred office by many solemn rites of consecration, and distinguished by a peculiar and splendid dress*. This honour, continues Lowman, which ought to distinguish Jehovah as above all gods, in the perfections of his nature and supreme authority, is further well expressed by the whole ceremonial of the sacrificial rites, whether we consider the things that were to be offered, or the persons who were to offer them,

* Vide Lowman on the Hebrew Worship, p. 253.

them, the several kinds of sacrifices, whole burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sin and trespass-offerings, which were to honour God as the supreme governor of the world, as forgiving iniquities, transgressions and sins, as the author of all blessings spiritual and temporal. These are plainly designed to give unto Jehovah, as their God, the glory due unto his name. Thus all the ritual holiness is manifestly designed for the same end, that "they might "be an holy people, as their God was an holy "God *." Hence the ritual distinctions of unclean foods and of several pollutions, as well as the ritual purifications after legal uncleanness, expressed a due honour to the presence of Jehovah; constantly representing how fit, how becoming it was, for those who were honoured with the nearest approach to this presence, to keep themselves pure, purged from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that they might honourably serve so pure and so holy a God.

I will close my remarks on this subject, by removing a very ill-grounded prejudice, too frequently entertained, against the Jewish Ritual, as a system intolerably burthensome. I observe, with Lowman †, that it is the ritual of a national, and not a personal worship: the whole worship of the Hebrew church, in their sacrifices and festivals, was fixed to the one temple and one altar, at the place where Jehovah dwelt; and it was absolutely forbid upon

* Vide Levit. xi. 44. & 45.; and many other passages.

† Lowman on the Heb. Worship, p. 203.

upon any pretence to offer any sacrifice on any occasion, but before the Divine Presence or the Shechinah. It was not, then, directed as personal, or as a family worship, or as more public in their towns or cities, throughout their whole land. So great reason there is, to distinguish between their synagogue and their temple worship. As to the general form of devotion, it seems to have been provided for by dispersing the Levites through every part of the Hebrew territory, in order to "teach Jacob the judgments, and Israel the law of "their God *," by setting apart the Sabbath for a day of holy rest, when they might receive public instruction, meet for the purposes of public prayer, and when both in public and in private they would have leisure to fulfil the strict injunction of their God, not only to keep his laws in their heart, but "thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, "and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine "house, and when thou walkest by the way, and "when thou liest down, and when thou risest up †." But the particular mode of doing this, the methods of diffusing religious knowledge, as well as for prayers and praises in their synagogues, seem to have been left to the ancient customs of the patriarchal religion, and to be directed by the common rules of reason and discretion; for the Ritual gave no other directions about them, than those general ones above stated; and we know that the mode of worship

* Deut. xxxiii. 10. † Ib. vi. 7.

worship adopted in the Jewish synagogues, subsequent to the captivity, differed but little from the present worship of Christian assemblies, for it consisted of three parts, reading the Scriptures, prayers, and preaching. But the ritual of the temple worship was only to be used personally, when the Jews were to appear before the presence of Jehovah. In this view, all objections against the Jewish Ritual as personally burthensome, tedious, or expensive, evidently appear to be wholly founded in ignorance and error: while, as a system of national worship, it was most wisely adapted to the great designs of the Jewish œconomy, even to preserve the Law, and the worship of the great Jehovah, in the Jewish race, and prepare the way for the promised MESSIAH, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

END OF PART THE SECOND.

APPENDIX.

SECT. I.

THE Texts which were collected by Le Clerc, as affording reason to doubt whether the Pentateuch was composed by Moses, considered; with the answer to the objection founded on each text annexed to it—Dr. Geddes's opinions on the authenticity of the Pentateuch, considered —Specimens of his reasonings on this subject—An article in the Appendix to the eighth Volume of the Critical Review for September 1806, *in which Mr. De Wett's work on the Old Testament is briefly considered —An humble remonstrance to the Reviewers.*

SECTION I.

TEXTS

WHICH HAVE OCCASIONED DOUBTS WHETHER THE PENTATEUCH WAS WRITTEN BY MOSES HIMSELF, OR COMPILED AT SOME LATER PERIOD*.

No. I.

TEXT: Gen. ii. 11 & 12.—"The name of the "first river is Pison: that is it which compasseth "the whole land of Havilath, where there is gold. "And the gold of that land is good: there is "bdellium and the onyx stone."

OBJECTION.—These observations appear the production of some one residing in Chaldæa, for Pison is that branch of the Euphrates which falls into the Persian Gulf, and passes by those countries which were formerly called Chaldæa, and where now Ormus is; and it is not credible that Moses, who had but just left Egypt, should be so well acquainted with the geography and productions of distant countries, or have been inspired on such a subject.

ANSWER, by Le Clerc himself.—Admitting these observations to relate to Chaldæa, that country might be extremely well known in Egypt at the time of Moses, by merchants trading thither. For if in the time of Jacob, companies of merchants traded from Gilead (vide Genes. xxxvii. 25.) to Egypt, with spices, &c. why might not merchants from Chaldæa trade thither, near four hundred years after, in the time of Moses? And thus

* Vide Clerici Prolegomena in Vet. Testam. Dissertatio Sia de Scriptore Pentateuchi, et Witsii Miscellanea Sacra, Tom. I. Lib. I. cap. xiv. An Moses Auctor Pentateuchi.

thus might not all these circumstances be easily known, to one educated in the court of Pharaoh, and "*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*"

No. II.

TEXT: Gen. x. 8 to 12.—"And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. Out of that land he went forth into Assyria, and builded Niniveth, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen, between Niniveth and Calah: the same is a great city."

OBJECTION.—First, this exactness in describing the cities of Mesopotamia and Assyria, appears to indicate an author conversant in those countries; and would be more natural after the Babylonish captivity, than at a period long before the Jews had any intercourse with the Babylonians. Secondly, Ninive took its name from Ninus the son of Belus, who lived in the time of Deborah, two hundred years after Moses.

ANSWER.—The celebrity of Babylon and the other cities, affords a natural reason why Moses should particularize them, as he has in several other cases alluded to ancient facts and ancient names; and there is no accuracy of knowledge in the enumeration, which may not naturally be ascribed to him. To the second *objection* it is *answered*, there is no proof which can be depended on, that Nimrod did not build Ninive as well as the other cities, or that it took its name from Ninus; and if it did, it would only prove, that this single name was added to the words of Moses, by some later writer, to complete the enumeration of these ancient and distinguished cities. I would add, that our common translation, which

which reads, "*Out of that land went Assur* (i.e. the Assyrian) *and built Niniveth,*" &c. removes the whole difficulty. This clause may have been naturally added by some writer in the flourishing state of the Assyrian empire, before or during the Babylonish captivity. And this translation is not only agreeable to the original Hebrew, but to the Septuagint, the Samaritan, the Syriac, the Arabic and the Vulgate versions.

In truth, there being no other objection than this very feeble and futile one, made to the enumerations contained in this tenth chapter of Genesis, as inconsistent with the state of the world at the time Moses lived, forms as strong a presumptive proof as can be desired, that it was really written by him; and that he possessed the most astonishing accuracy of information as to the origin of nations, and the primæval history and spread of mankind. It is indeed most remarkable, that this chapter, short as it is, supplies the only clue which directs our steps, in tracing the progress of nations in the very remotest period of antiquity; and that the authors who have followed it with the closest attention, have been most successful in evolving the labyrinths and penetrating the recesses of the very earliest history, and explaining in a rational and consistent manner the apparently wild and chimerical fictions of heathen mythology. Memorable examples of this are found in the *Phaleg* of *Bochart*, in which, from this account in Genesis, he traces with such wonderful accuracy and success the origin of nations; and thus decidedly confirms the Mosaic history, which declares that, "of the "three sons of Noah was the whole earth over-"spread *."

Equally remarkable is the success with which the learned Bryant, following the same guide, has analysed the various systems and fables of ancient mythology, and shewn how naturally they can be explained and connected,

* Gen. ix. 19.

connected, by considering them as ultimately derived from the facts and characters of the Mosaic records. I might easily multiply instances, but I forbear, and proceed with my subject.

No. III.

TEXT: Gen. xi. 28 & 31.—" Haran died in Ur " of the Chaldees—they went from Ur of the Chal- " dees, to the land of Canaan."

OBJECTION.—This city or country could not be so called in the time of Abraham, for the *Chasdem* or *Chaldæans* descended from *Chesed*, who was the nephew of Abraham by his brother Nahor, Gen. xxii. 22. In the time of Moses that region was called Padan Aram; it was the more modern writers about the time of the captivity, who called it the land of the Chaldees.

ANSWER, by Witsius.—Le Clerc, who advanced the objection, confesses it is altogether uncertain whether the Chaldæans derived their name from Chesed, and where this city was, since it was the name of two cities near the Euphrates: the extent of the land of Chaldæa is also uncertain. It is remarkable that Le Clerc, who on reflection abandoned and even refuted his own objections to the authenticity of the Pentateuch, has omitted to take any notice of this in his review of them; in all probability deeming it too trifling.

It is indeed not wonderful that Witsius should grow a little angry: after stating the answer, he adds, " Hæc " si vera sunt ne species quidem difficultatis superest, " quid ergo movit criticum nisi prava carpendi libido, " ex qua orta est quam subjungit accusatio, *scriptores* " *sacros parum exactos esse nominibus.*" If Le Clerc advanced this accusation, it was certainly a rash act; but he should be forgiven, since he as certainly repented of it.

No.

No. IV.

TEXT: Gen. xii. 6.—"The Canaanite was then "in the land;" and xiii. 7. "The Canaanite and "the Perizzite then dwelled in the land."

OBJECTION.—They therefore were *not* there when this history was written, but they continued there until after the death of Moses; therefore he was not the author of this book.

ANSWER, by Witsius.—It does not follow from this clause, that the Canaanites had been expelled when it was written; it may mean no more, than that the Canaanites were *even at that time* in the land which God had promised to give to the seed of Abraham. And this observation may have been intended to illustrate the faith of Abraham, who did not hesitate to obey the command of God, by sojourning in this strange land, though even then inhabited by a powerful nation totally unconnected with if not averse to him: a circumstance intimated by Abraham's remonstrance to Lot, to avoid any enmity between them, "because they were brethren;" as if he had said, It would be most extreme imprudence for us who are brethren, who have no connexion or friendship but with each other, to allow any dissension to arise between us, surrounded as we are by strangers, indifferent to or even averse to us, who might rejoice at our quarrel, and take advantage of it to our common mischief: "for the Canaanite and Pe-"rizzite was even then in the land." What is there in this, asks Witsius, which Moses might not have said? I may venture to add that another reason may be given, for noticing the circumstance of the Canaanite and Perizzite having been then in the land which, Moses immediately after declares, God had promised to the seed of Abraham. The Israelites might thus be most

clearly

clearly satisfied, that no change had taken place in the purpose of God to give them this land, when they were reminded that at the very time this purpose had been declared, the very same nation possessed the country, who still occupied it. It may be necessary to remark, that Dr. Geddes insists that *it must be granted*, that "this comma supplies a proof, that this history was "written after the expulsion of the Canaanites, or that "it must be considered as an addition by some "posterior scribe;" which last he is not disposed to admit. He adduces Dathe and Rosenmüller as explaining the passage as Witsius had done: "the Ca-"naanite was even then in the land." They are as respectable authorities in Hebrew literature as even Dr. Geddes himself; and I think the Doctor's opinion, that this comma was necessarily written after the expulsion of the Canaanites, already sufficiently refuted.

No. V.

TEXT: Gen. xiii. 18.—"Abram dwelt in the "plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron."

OBJECTION.—It appears from Joshua xiv. 15. and xv. 13. that the original name of this place was Kirjath Arba, and that it probably took the name of Hebron from the grandson of Caleb.

ANSWER.—The words "which is in Hebron," seem to have been added by a later hand, to mark out the place, as evidently was done in Genesis, xxiii. 2. "And "Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in "the land of Canaan." Such explanatory additions becoming necessary by time, appear to me rather to confirm than impeach the antiquity of the original. Witsius thinks Hebron added as an explanatory word, wherever it occurs.

No. VI.

TEXT: Gen. xiv. 14.—"Abram pursued them "unto Dan."

OBJECTION.—Dan acquired that name from the Danites, long after Moses, the ancient name of the city being Laish.

ANSWER.—Le Clerc from Josephus, Antiq. Lib. I. cap. x. observes, that this place was so called from its being near one of the fountains of the river JORDAN; JOR was the name of the other. Witsius seems to think this word was inserted by a later hand (Samuel or Ezra) as explanatory of the situation, in the room of an old name, the application of which was unknown. I would add, that the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Arabic version read, instead of DAN, BANJAS. There was therefore probably some uncertainty as to the name which had originally stood here; which would render the insertion of a modern name to mark the place plainly, more necessary.

No. VII.

TEXT: Gen. xx. 7.—"He is a prophet. נביא."

OBJECTION.—This word was of a more modern date than Moses, as appears from 1 Samuel, ix. 9.

ANSWER.—The word is certainly used in this sense constantly in the Pentateuch. Thus, Exod. vii. 1. God tells Moses, "thy brother shall be thy *prophet*," thy נביא. Numb. xi. 29. "Would God the Lord's people were all *prophets*," the same word is used; and Numb. xi. 27. "Eldad and Medad do *prophesy*," the same root is used; and Deut. xiii. 1. 3. 5. *prophet* is expressed by the same word; and in the promise of God to Moses, Deut. xviii. 18. "God will raise them up a *prophet* like "unto thee." Nor does the passage in Samuel prove the

word

word was never used before, but rather that it was not used to denote strictly a *foreseer* of future events, which in Samuel's time it was appropriated to. "Beforetime in "Israel, when a man went to enquire of God," (to reveal secrets or future events) "thus he spake, Come, and let "us go to the seer הרואה—for he that is now called a "prophet נביא, was beforetime called a seer." Now to me this change of signification appears perfectly natural, and easily to be accounted for. The early Patriarchs to whom this word was applied, and Aaron himself, were much more distinguished as *intercessors* with God, *expounders* of his will, and *teachers* of true religion, than as foreseers of future events. At that period or afterwards two distinct words may have been used to denote these two ideas: in process of time, as the teachers sent from God became more distinguished for prophecy, the word originally applied to them *generally*, became more *confined* to the predictors of future events, and superseded the use of the second word, which had been more recently introduced, and was always of inferior dignity.

But be this as it may, the word is most frequently used to denote a prophet, in the other books of Scripture, and even in Samuel. Le Clerc on mature consideration (and it should seem very rationally) thought that instead of calling into question the authenticity of the entire Pentateuch, in consequence of this parenthesis, we should rather question the authority of the parenthesis in 1 Sam. ix. 9. which is entirely unconnected with the context, perplexes the sense, and seems evidently to have been a marginal note which crept into the text, and at a wrong place too. Vide Clerici Notas in 1 Sam. ix. 9.

No. VIII.

TEXT: Gen. xxii. 14.—"And Abraham called "the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said

"to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be "seen."

OBJECTION.—Some persons affirm this to be the mountain Moriah, on which the temple was built; and that it did not get this name מוריה, which say they, is the same as that taken from this event, יראה, until the temple had been built. Besides, the phrase "*as it is said to this day* in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," does not seem adapted to the period when Moses lived.

ANSWER.—There is nothing but mere conjecture for the mount Moriah deriving its name from this event, and still less for its not being so called until after the temple was built. The name *Jireh*, though similar in sense to Morijeh or Moriah, is not the same, and may have been in use from the time of Abraham: and the interval between Abraham and Moses was long enough (above four hundred years) to justify the expression, *as it is said to this day*. Le Clerc brings many instances to confirm such a use of the words *to this day*: I think unnecessarily. In truth I do not clearly understand either the objection or the answer. If the reader is curious, he may find them in Clerici Dissertatio, No. vii. p. 32. Witsius takes no notice of this objection, nor do I think it was necessary to notice it; but I am unwilling to suppress any appearance of objection.

Dr. Geddes is of opinion that there is no necessity to say with Eben Ezra that there is here any interpolation; it may be a part of the original narrative, whether written by Moses or any other person; an expression may become proverbial, during the lifetime even of him who first uttered it. All that we can lawfully infer from the text is, that these words "in the mountain the Lord will provide" had become a proverbial saying when the author wrote.

No.

No. IX.

TEXT: Gen. xxxv. 21. —"And Israel journeyed, "and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar."

OBJECTION.—The writer of this could not be Moses, for Edar was the name of a tower over one of the gates of Jerusalem; beyond the present site of which, says the writer, Israel spread his tent.

ANSWER.—The tower of Edar means the *tower of the flocks*, and there might have been different towers so called in the time of Jacob; and if the gate of Jerusalem stood in the spot meant by Moses, it may have gained its name from this old name, now revived and applied to a new object.

The learned Mr. Marsh observes, that this objection implies a manifest absurdity; "for if the writer of this "passage had meant the tower of Edar in Jerusalem, "he would have made Jacob spread his tent beyond a "tower, that probably did not exist till many hundred "years after his death *." But Dr. Geddes builds much upon this text; vide infra.

No. X.

TEXT: Gen. xxxvi. 31. —"And these are the "kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before "there reigned any king over the children of "Israel."

OBJECTION.—There are then reckoned up eight kings in succession, that is, as many as there were generations from Jacob to Obed, grandfather of David, and cotemporary with Saul the first king of Israel; whereas from Jacob to Moses were only four generations, as Moses himself counts them.

Witsius

* Vide Marsh on the Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses, Cambridge, 1792, p. 14.

Witsius ANSWERS—There was here nothing Moses might not have said, for in Gen. xxxv. 11. it was promised to Jacob that "kings should come out of his loins;" and Moses might mark it as a singular fact, that so many kings had reigned over Esau before his own time, and consequently before this promise to Jacob had been fulfilled: and it appears from Deut. xvii. 14. Moses foretold the Jews would elect kings. As to the number of kings, 236 years elapsed from the death of Isaac, when Esau took possession of Edom, to the time when Moses became leader of the Jews, and this might well allow eight successions of kings. Le Clerc, however, from an idea that this passage, if retained, would imply a prophetic declaration of Moses, on a subject which did not require it, supposes that from ver. 31 to 40, is *an interpolation* of a later hand; and I confess I think it carries internal evidence of its being so; it is written in a different manner from the parts before and after it, being much more particular than the rest of the chapter, mentioning not only the king's names, but the names of the cities they built, and of the *wives* of *some*, and of memorable actions they performed; whereas in ver. 40. we find the enumeration of dukes or chiefs descended from Esau, resumed and carried on with the simplicity of the preceding part of the chapter; and ending with this expression, "these be the *dukes of Edom*, according "to their habitations in the land of their possession; he "is Esau, the father of the Edomites." Now this looks as if only *dukes* had been mentioned before, otherwise it would probably have been said, "these are the *dukes and kings* of Edom," &c. Such an insertion might naturally enough have been made by Samuel, to complete the historical sketch of Edom in this chapter. But either way the general authenticity of the Pentateuch cannot be affected by it. After having formed the above opinion, I was much gratified at finding that it coincides with that of the learned Kennicott, who insists that

these verses were evidently taken from 1 Chr. i. 43. 54. from whence having been inserted in the margin of some very ancient MS. here in Genesis, they were afterwards taken into the text. Vide Kennicott's Remarks on select Passages of the Old Testament, p. 35.

No. XI.

TEXT: Gen. xl. 15.—Joseph says, "For indeed "I was taken away out of the land of the He- "brews."

OBJECTION.—It could not be called *the land of the Hebrews*, until they had invaded and taken possession of it.

ANSWER.—Joseph might well call that particular part of the land of Canaan near Hebron, where Isaac and Jacob had resided for so many years, the land of the Hebrews. They, it is true, were not originally natives of the country, but they possessed such wealth, such numerous families, herds and flocks, that they were looked up to as mighty princes, (vide the language of the Children of Heth to Abraham, Gen. xxiii. 6.) We find them joining the neighbouring kings in making war (vide Gen. xiv;) making compacts and leagues even with kings (vide Gen. xxi. 23. and xxvi. 14;) and even conquering entire cities (as Gen. xxxiv.;) living according to their own customs and exercising their own religion. It is therefore perfectly credible, the place of their residence may have been termed the land of the Hebrews, as they had been there for such a length of time, independent and in alliance with the natives (vide Gen. xiv. 13.)—These are the observations of the learned Altingius, adopted by Witsius, and confirmed by Le Clerc.

No. XII.

TEXT: Exod. vi. 26, 27.—At the end of the genealogy of the tribe of Levi is added, "These are "that Aaron and Moses, to whom the Lord said, "Bring the children of Israel from the land of "Egypt according to their armies. These are they, "which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring "out the children of Israel: these are that Moses "and Aaron."

OBJECTION.—This could not have been written by Moses; he would not thus ostentatiously and unnecessarily particularize himself and his brother: it is the language of a person writing long after his death.

ANSWER.—It was neither ostentatious nor unnecessary to point out to future generations, that the *Aaron* from whom the *High Priests descended*, was the same employed by God to act such a distinguished part in the deliverance of his chosen people; and thus mentioning of Aaron, who acted but a secondary part, it would have been unnatural to omit Moses, who was the chief. And that this was the real reason of this particular notice, appears from the *sons of Aaron*, from whom the High Priests were to be taken, being *distinctly* enumerated, while *no notice* is *taken* of the *sons of Moses*, who were to remain in a private station undistinguished among the Levites. Had the learned critics noticed this last circumstance, they would probably have seen that this passage, instead of affording any reason to suspect that Moses did not write it, supplies a strong presumptive proof that he did; for any other writer would have been disposed to treat the great legislator of the Jews with more distinction than his brother. May I then be permitted to say, that this circumstance supplies another

instance

instance of the *coincidence* of the *narrative* with the *peculiar character and situation of the supposed author*, to be added to those enumerated Part I. Lect. III. and confirming the internal proofs there adduced, to establish the genuineness and truth of the Pentateuch.

It is scarcely necessary to notice here the futile and ignorant objection of *Paine*, that Moses speaks of himself in the *third person*; an objection which would disprove the genuineness of the works of Thucydides, Xenophon and Cæsar, as well as of Moses. In truth, this writer, whose ignorance can be only equalled by his temerity, his presumption and his virulence, has been already so fully exposed and confuted, especially by the venerable Bishop WATSON, that I think it unnecessary to go out of my way particularly to notice his cavils. I may however, I believe, venture to say, that such of them as relate to that part of Scripture which it is the object of this work to vindicate, have been considered and confuted in it.

No. XIII.

TEXT: Exod. xvi. 35.—"And the children of "Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came "into a land inhabited: they did eat manna, until "they came into the borders of the land of Canaan." —"Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah."

OBJECTION.—This could not have been written by Moses, as the Jews did not reach the borders of Canaan, or cease to eat manna, till after his death; nor would Moses speak thus of an omer, the measure by which all the people gathered the manna, "an omer for every man." It is the language of one speaking when this measure was out of use, and an ephah more generally known.

ANSWER.—This is *plainly a passage inserted by a later hand*; it forms a complete parenthesis, entirely unconnected with the narrative, which having given a full account

account of the miraculous provision of manna, closes it with the order to Aaron "to lay up an omer full of "manna in the ark, as a memorial to be kept for their "generations." This was evidently the last circumstance relating to this matter, which it was necessary for Moses to mention; and he accordingly then resumes the regular account of the journeyings of the people. Some later writer was very naturally led to insert the additional circumstance, of the time during which this miraculous provision was continued, and probably * added an explanatory note, to ascertain the capacity of an omer, which was the quantity of food provided for each individual by God; to ascertain it therefore must have been a matter of curiosity. Possibly the manna laid up in the ark might have been lost when it was taken by the Philistines, and this note added by Samuel.

Here again I contend, that the insertion of such notes rather confirms than impeaches the antiquity and genuineness of the original narrative. If this were a compilation long subsequent to the events it records, such additions would not have been plainly distinguishable as they now are, from the main substance of the original; since the entire history would have been composed with the same ideas and views as these additions were; and such explanatory insertions would not have been made, if length of time had not rendered them necessary.

No.

* I say only probably, because the words, "*an omer is the tenth part of an ephah,*" might very naturally be used by Moses, who might mark the relation between an omer and an ephah, to transmit it to posterity. The Numbers, iii. 46. in the account of the redemption-money of the first-born, "over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites," Moses says, "Thou shalt take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the "sanctuary shalt thou take them. The shekel is twenty gerahs." Now that this passage was written by Moses, I have endeavoured to prove from its very nature, Vide supra, p. 163. note. In truth, in a history descending to such minuteness as the Mosaic history does, such notices as these are perfectly natural; and such particularity is the strongest proof of genuineness and truth. Vide supra, Part I. Lect. III. and IV.

No. XIV.

TEXT: Deut. i. 1.—" These be the words which " Moses spake unto all Israel *beyond* Jordan in the " Wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea, " between Paran and Tophel, and Laban, and " Hazeroth, and Dizahab."

OBJECTION.—No objection at all to our translation *(on this side Jordan)*, with which the Syriac agrees, and the Targum of Onkelos retaining the same word as in the original Hebrew, leaves it undetermined whether it should be *on this side* or *beyond* Jordan. The objection then lies against the *Vulgate* and the *Septuagint*, which translate *beyond* Jordan, a situation which supposes the writer in Palestine, where Moses never was.

ANSWER.—The objection is founded on a mistranslation: the original word בעבר is completely ambiguous, signifying sometimes *beyond*, sometimes *on this side*, or more properly *at* or *on the passage* of Jordan; thus in Joshua, xii. 1. the words translated *on the other side* Jordan towards the rising of the east, and ver. 7. *on this side* Jordan on the west, are both expressed by the same Hebrew word. For more, vide Le Clerc in locum: Witsius's Dissertatio, No. 46. p. 129; Huetius Demonstratio Evangelica, Prop. 4. cap. xiv; and Bibliotheca Biblica in locum, notwithstanding Dr. Geddes's difference of opinion.

No. XV.

TEXT: Deut. iii. 11.—" Only Og king of Bashan " remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bed- " stead was a bedstead of iron: is it not in Rabbath " of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the " length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, " after the cubit of a man."

OBJECTION.—It is not natural Moses should speak thus of a man lately slain, and all the circumstances about

about whom must have been so well known to the Israelites; and it was more likely his bedstead should be at Basan, his own capital, than in any city of the children of Ammon.

Answer.—Le Clerc, who made the objection, observes, Moses might wish to refer posterity to this bedstead as a lasting monument of the extraordinary stature of Og; and we know from Deut. ii. 21. that the Ammonites had expelled a race of gigantic stature from their country; and possibly this very Og had been one of them, and his bedstead may have been preserved as a trophy of victory at Rabbath, for a considerable time before Moses wrote.—This answer of Le Clerc's seems sufficient; yet I acknowledge this verse and the 9th, "*which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion, and the Amorites call it Shenir,*" appear to me explanatory additions by a later hand; as also ver. 14. (*Vide infra.*) Perhaps the situation of this territory beyond Jordan, and its remoteness from the land of *Judæa Proper,* might have made some subsequent writer more anxious to illustrate this part of the history by short marginal notes, and confirm it by reference to known monuments and names. This opinion I formed before I had read Dr. Geddes's strong assertion, "that he who could "believe this verse was written by Moses, is ripe for "believing any thing." I do not believe it was written by Moses, and yet I do most firmly believe Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.—N. B. Dr. Geddes with some probability interprets this word, a coffin, not a bedstead, and conjectures that Og, after the battle in which he was subdued, when he found himself unable to defend his own capital, had fled to Rabbath, where he may have died and been buried in this coffin.

No. XVI.

Text: Deut. iii. 14.—"Jair the son of Manas-"seh took all the country of Argob, unto the coasts "of

" of Geshuri, and Maachathi; and called them after " his own name Bashan-havoth-jair unto this day."

OBJECTION.—" *Unto this day,*" could not have been written by Moses, as the event happened only a few months before his death.

ANSWER.—This is undoubtedly the *insertion of some later writer* willing to connect this memorandum of ancient history with the part of the Mosaic record to which it properly belonged. And though the critics have not noticed it, yet it seems to me evident, that the very substance and structure of this verse mark it as an interpolation. In the two verses before, and the two verses after, Moses mentions the distribution he had made of the lands taken on that side Jordan, to the two and a half tribes, with this remarkable phrase *annexed* to each " *I gave them.*" Thus the 13th verse is, " And " the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the king- " dom of Og, gave I unto the half-tribe of Manasseh; " all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was " called the land of giants." The verse now in question *repeats* this fact in a form *different* from that used immediately before, *interrupting* the narrative by telling us, that *Jair* the son of Manasseh *took all the country of Argob,* &c.; and *then* the legislator *proceeds* again in the first person, in perfect connexion with the 13th verse, but very abruptly as following the 14th, " And I *gave* Gilead unto Machir." In a word, we must include the 14th verse in a parenthesis, to preserve the train of thought and style unbroken: its introduction is forced and unnecessary.

No. XVII.

TEXT: — The entire Thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, which *gives an account of the death of Moses.*

ANSWER.—The words of Moses evidently conclude with the thirty-third chapter, which contains the blessings pronounced

pronounced by him on the whole people collectively, and the several tribes distinctly, before he went up by the command of God to Mount Nebo, to view the land of Canaan and to die there. The thirty-fourth chapter was added to complete the history, the first eight verses probably immediately after his death by his successor Joshua, the last four by some later writer, probably Ezra.

We have now collected all the passages which the ingenuity and diligence of Le Clerc, a most acute critic, could discover in the Pentateuch, calculated to raise a doubt whether it was not composed by some writer later than Moses, which on a hasty view of the subject, he maintained was the fact; and adopted the wild hypothesis, that the Pentateuch was compiled by the priest, sent from Assyria to teach the colonists settled by Nebuchadnezzar in Samaria, the manner of worshipping the God of the land. On maturer consideration, he distinctly saw and candidly acknowledged, that these passages did not bear him out in this opinion; which he accordingly publicly retracted, and distinctly reconsidered all the Texts he had alleged in its support, and refuted the arguments against the genuineness of the Pentateuch, which he had derived from them. Witsius, who answered his original objections, and says of him, "In iis conquirendis omnium ni fallor diligentiam supe-"ravit doctissimus Clericus," concludes his answer with observing, that "if all these texts are considered with-"out prejudice, only four passages of the entire volume "can be found, in which an interpolation must be "recognized; and this an interpolation so slight, as "only to extend to the change of *some one word*, or "the addition of some *one historical memorandum* (in "additione brevissimæ historiolæ) to which the words "of the original gave a natural occasion." "And surely "(concludes Witsius) these minute additions do not "bear

" bear out the enormous assumption of pronouncing, " that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, in " opposition to the credit due to the suffrage of all " antiquity, as well as the authority of Christ and the " Apostles."

Le Clerc was very naturally disposed to give his own objections as great a degree of importance as they would bear, and his conclusion is as follows: " Hence we may " collect, that of eighteen passages, which are adduced " as indications of a more modern date in the Penta- " teuch, the greater number are doubtful; and it cannot " therefore be urged, that there are *every where* through " *the Books of Moses* marks of a different age. Some " are plainly added by another hand, and yet they are " not such as to prevent us from acknowledging these " books to be the work of Moses; just as no one would " deny that the Iliad and Odyssey were the works of " Homer, because, as the old grammarians allege, there " are various verses interpolated in different parts of " these poems. We are not to imagine that in the " most ancient times, there was as great a variety of " books or as many copies of the same book as at " present; therefore it might easily come to pass, that " any thing added to the writings of Moses by any later " prophet, might afterwards appear in all copies of a " subsequent date."

Le Clerc adds, " If indeed it was not from other con- " siderations evident, that far the greatest part of the " Pentateuch must have been written by Moses himself, " as we have before shewn, there would, I confess, arise " from these marks of a more modern hand, most strong " reasons for believing that the entire work was written " at a later period. But as we have certainly proved, " that we must acknowledge almost the entire Pen- " tateuch to have been written by Moses, there is no " cause why we should not attribute these books to " him."

These

These arguments of the learned Critic I have endeavoured to combine with such others, as appeared to me most important, in the First Part of the preceding Work, Lect. I. and II.; and I hope I may add, that I have traced another series of proofs from the internal structure of the history, in Lect. III. and IV. which preceding writers had not adverted to, and which, combined with those before adduced, form a mass of *direct* proofs that the entire Pentateuch was the work of Moses himself; against which the presumptions and *suspicions* grounded on the Texts we have been now considering, are of so little weight as to be incapable of raising any serious doubt in any candid or reflecting mind.

DR. GEDDES'S OPINIONS ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PENTATEUCH, CONSIDERED:—SPECIMENS OF HIS REASONINGS ON THIS SUBJECT.

THE minuteness of this discussion will, I trust, be excused, when it is recollected, that the genuineness of the Pentateuch is still doubted or denied, by Writers who claim the character of learned critics, and even of profound divines. Amongst these, the LATE Reverend Dr. GEDDES must not be passed by. As a theologian, commentator on and translator of the Scriptures, he certainly has reached the very *acme of liberality*, even in this liberal age. The general tenor of his opinions is indeed very clearly summed up, where he tells us that "On the "whole I think it may be laid down as an axiom, that "the bulk of Christians, whether Protestants or Papists, "cannot be said to have a rational faith, because their "motives of credibility are not rational motives, but the "positive assertions of an assumed authority, which "they have never discussed or durst not question; their "religion is the fruit of unenlightened credulity. A "very *small number* * *of curious and learned men only* "have

* Vide Preface to Critical Remarks, p. 5 & 6.

" have thoroughly examined the motives of their reli-
" gious belief, in any communion; and *it will be found,*
" *I presume, that the* MORE, CURIOUS *and* LEARNED
" *they were, the* LESS *they* GENERALLY BELIEVED:
" hence perhaps the old adage, *Ignorance is the mother*
" *of devotion.*" A writer holding *this principle* as an AXIOM, and ranking himself if not with the learned, yet certainly with the curious, we may expect would be careful *not to believe too much.* He tells us indeed, (and I will not presume to question his veracity, to his own master he must stand or fall) " I willingly profess
" myself a sincere though unworthy disciple of Christ;
" the Gospel of Jesus is my religious code, and his
" doctrines my dearest delight: Christian is my name,
" and Catholic my surname. Rather than renounce
" these glorious titles, I would shed my blood. Catholic
" Christianity I revere wherever I find it," &c. &c. But as he has no where condescended to tell us, in what Catholic Christianity consists, " that Christianity
" which is a rational, a most rational religion;" I can only enter this solemn protest against any rash infidel, who may claim Dr. Geddes's authority as supporting infidelity, from his supporting particular opinions, which with minds differently constituted would lead to it. His conclusion we see is different, though his premises are unhappily too often the same with those of the infidel. I am compelled to notice some of them connected with the subject of this Work.

The Pentateuch this learned Critic admires and applauds, declaring that " whether it be considered as a
" body of history, or as a system of jurisprudence, it
" will not appear to shrink from a comparison with any
" piece of ancient writing, even when divested of every
" privilege it might claim from revelation." To prove this more clearly, the Doctor in the process of his inquiries strips it of all such privileges. With him,

Moses was *no more inspired than Teutas, Numa, or Lycurgus**; and the query, whether Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, appears to him "never to have been "sufficiently answered, unless injurious language may "be deemed an answer." And he declares that from *intrinsic* evidence it appears to him indubitable, "first, "that the Pentateuch in its *present form* was not written "by Moses; secondly, it was written in the land of "Canaan, and most probably at Jerusalem; thirdly, it "could not be written before the reign of David, nor "after that of Hezekiah." Here he was impatient to enlighten mankind by communicating the *result* of his inquiries, though he had not leisure to communicate the *proofs* on which that result depends. He had reserved those for his *general preface*, which he had not time to write in fourteen years (for his Prospectus was published in 1786, his Critical Remarks in 1800;) and unhappily death has closed his labours, before he was able to favour the world with this long promised Preface; we are therefore compelled to glean his reasons as they are scattered in his volumes.

I think it however necessary to remark his concession, that though he is inclined to believe the Pentateuch was reduced to its present form in the reign of Solomon, yet he is persuaded, "it was compiled from ancient docu- "ments, some coeval with and some even anterior to "Moses." And he further observes, "*From the time of* "*Moses there can be no doubt, I think, of the Jews* "*having written records.* Moses, who had been taught "all the wisdom of the Egyptians, most probably was "the first Hebrew writer or the first who applied "writing to historical compositions. *From his journals* "*a great part of the Pentateuch seems to have been* "*compiled.*

* Vide his Verses in answer to a Friend, who asked him, Whether he thought Moses inspired? End of the Critical Remarks.

" *compiled.* Whether he were also the original author of " the Hebrew cosmogony, and of the history prior to " his own days, I would neither confidently assert nor " positively deny."

On the integrity of the present text of the Pentateuch, he observes, that " though it has not come down to us " without alterations, yet what work of antiquity is " there, the text of which we have so many means of " correcting as that of the Pentateuch? Two rival " peoples, the Jews and Samaritans, have preserved " separate exemplars of it in different characters; it " was excellently translated into Greek, at a period " when the copies must have been much less imperfect " than they afterwards became; and we have various " versions of very early date, by the help of which, " compared with the original and with one another, and " of the various readings of the text itself, collected in " the present century from a great number of manu- " scripts, a nearly genuine copy of the Pentateuch may, " by the rules of a judicious criticism, be at length " obtained."

In this entire account there is certainly some obscurity and confusion. What is meant by the Pentateuch *in its present form?* Does it mean this work with every word or verse which now is found in it, *e.g.* with the last chapter of Deuteronomy; or the text, as to the kings of Edom, marked above, No. X.? In this sense it might be admitted, that the Pentateuch in its *present form*, i.e. *so far as relates to these few passages*, plainly inserted by some later writer long after Moses, to explain or complete the history, was not entirely written by Moses, nor completed perhaps until the time of Ezra. But if, as the Doctor admits, there can be no doubt that the Jews had written records from the time of Moses; if the Pentateuch was compiled from *the very journals of Moses himself*; then it becomes the province of sound criticism to decide, how much of it is thus formed of

the journals of Moses. I think I have proved from clear internal evidence, it was *entirely composed* of these identical journals, that is, entirely written by Moses himself, except only the *few passages* above referred to.

The learned Doctor has no where clearly detailed his opinions on this point in their full extent, by distinguishing the passages he considered as the genuine production of Moses, from those which he attributes to the supposed modern compiler. He has however given us some specimens of his mode of reasoning on this subject, which I proceed to consider.

Gen. x. 19.—Dr. Geddes in this verse adopts the Samaritan reading, which describes the bounds of Canaan as more extensive than the Hebrew text, viz. "from "the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates and to the "HINDER sea," (an expression elegant perhaps, but to me not very clear.) And he observes, "I prefer the "Samaritan reading to the Hebrew, for the following "reasons: in the promise made to Abraham, chap. "xv. ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, the very same boundaries "are assigned to the land of Canaan in all the copies, "which are here marked in the Samaritan, and the same "number of peoples or tribes included in them. Again, in "Exod. xxiii. 31. the same boundaries are assigned in a "more particular manner from the Red Sea to the Sea of "the Philistines (that is, the Mediterranean) and from the "Wilderness of Shur to the great river Euphrates. It is "true this was not accomplished until the reigns of David "and Solomon, which latter is expressly said in the first "Book of Kings, iv. 21. to have had dominion over all "the kingdoms from the river Euphrates unto the land "of the Philistines, and unto the borders of Egypt. "But whence (asks the Doctor) sprung the present "reduction of those boundaries in the present text of "Genesis? That I know not; but I *suspect* it arose "from this; that when the compiler or translator of "the present copy of the Hebrew text lived, the boun-

"daries

" daries of Judæa had been greatly circumscribed, and " he had *accommodated his text* to that circumscription. " But why then left he the other two passages unal- " tered? This indeed *I cannot account for, nor am I* " *obliged to account for it:* but this I affirm, the *present* " *Hebrew text* is *inconsistent with itself*, the Samaritan " is consistent; let the reader choose whether of the " two he will abide by." Now I should have no hesitation in choosing the *consistent text*; but I really think it not very *candid* in the learned Doctor, to impute to his imaginary compiler of the present Hebrew Pentateuch exactly *knavery* enough to alter, so as to *accommodate* to the existing bounds of the land of Judæa, a *text* where no allusion to these bounds occurs, and *dulness* enough to leave *unaltered* passages which prophetically and directly pointed out these bounds, in a manner *contrary* to what Dr. Geddes supposes to have been their extent in the compiler's time. Let us however consider on what grounds this charge of inconsistency against the Hebrew text, *as it now stands*, is founded.

Gen. xv. 18 to 21, relates, " In that same day the " Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto " thy seed have I given this land, from the river of " Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the " Kenites, and the Kennezzites, and the Kadmonites, " and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, " and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Ger- " gashites, and the Jebusites." Here God promises to the Jews a great extent of country, from the Nile to the Euphrates, inhabited by *ten* distinct nations or rather tribes, of whom *one* was distinguished by the name of CANAANITES, who therefore inhabited only a *part** of this

* The learned Bochart, *Phaleg*, Lib. IV. cap. xxxvi. remarks that " the " Canaanites were those who inhabited partly on the sea and partly on the " banks of Jordan; deriving their name either from their being merchants, " which the word in Hebrew imports, or because they held the chief place

this extended country. Now Genesis, x. 15—19. states that "Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth, and "the Jebusite, and the Emorite, and the Gergashite, "and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Senite, and "the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; "and afterward were the families of the Canaanite "spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites "was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; "as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, "and Zeboim, even unto Lashah." This country is certainly only a *part* of that included in the subsequent promise to Abraham. But is it not obvious that there are two natural and credible hypotheses, on which this apparent difference can be reconciled; one, that of the numerous descendants of Canaan *some one* tribe were particularly distinguished by the name of *Canaanites*; and that when the text says, "*and afterward were the families of the Canaanites enlarged*," it means to mark out the peculiar extension of *this tribe*, and describes in the 19th verse the borders of *their territory*. This is not an imaginary hypothesis, because it appears from Gen. xv. 21. and Exod. xxiii. 28. that in the time of Abram and also of Moses, *one peculiar tribe* or nation descended from Canaan were called *Canaanites*, while others also descended from him had other names. Admitting this, is there any inconsistency between the passage which states, Gen. x. 19. that this *single* tribe occupied a *small* country, and Gen. xv. 18 to 21. which states, that *this tribe, united with nine others*, occupied a *much larger* space? But if this solution be not admitted, and it be maintained that Gen. x. 19. describes

"for some time amongst the descendants of Canaan." Vide p. 348. Bochart remarks that "of the eleven families of the Canaanites enumerated "Gen. x. 15. six were not involved in the anathema or condemnation which "the Jews were authorized to execute, the Sidonii, Arkæi, Sinæi, Avadii, "Samarai, Hamathæi; a new proof, if any were wanting, that it was their "*own national guilt*, not merely their descent from a guilty ancestor, which "drew down on the condemned nations the judgments of God."

describes the *entire* country occupied by *all* the descendants of Canaan; is there yet any inconsistency in supposing that this is only the country occupied by them *soon after their first division* into distinct tribes, or as the text expresses, "after the families spread abroad;" but that in three hundred years after, when the promise was made to Abraham, the *same* nations occupied a much *greater extent of country*, and four hundred years after Abraham, in the time of Moses, a still greater? which is then (as Dr. Geddes observes) more particularly marked out, for this plain reason, that then it became more necessary to point out its precise bounds, that the Jews might know how much they were authorized to take possession of. Such then is the foundation on which this *critic* charges the *sacred text* with *inconsistency*, and its *compiler with fraud*. I feel no inclination to give any man *injurious language*; but the friends of this learned Doctor must excuse me, if I do not in this instance give him credit for that caution, judgment and candour, which such a discussion requires; and if, taught by this single example, I feel indisposed to adopt his conclusions, where he has not stated the reasons by which they are maintained.

But Doctor Geddes insists strongly on the text, Gen. xxxv. 21. "Israel journeyed, and spread his tent "beyond the tower of Edar." (Vide the texts considered before No. IX.) He founds his objection not so much on the *identity* of this tower with that over the gate of Jerusalem, as on the use of the word *beyond*. He observes, "whether this tower were not far from Bethlehem, or near to the sheep-gate of Jerusalem, if "Moses had written this, he would not, he could not "have expressed himself in this manner; in describing "a journey from Bethel to Jerusalem, he could not with "propriety say of any intermediate place, that Jacob "had come *beyond* it, when such an event happened; "whether he be supposed to have written his history in

"Egypt or in his way to Canaan." As this objection did not occur to any preceding writer, let us consider it. The expression translated *beyond* is מהלאה, compounded of the word הלאה, which by itself signifies *trans, ultra, beyond, further on,* or as Leigh (vide his Critica Sacra) expresses it, "*loci et temporis distantiam et remotionem significat,*" and the præfix מ, which signifies *a, ab, from.* The compound is translated by Montanus, *ab ultra, from beyond,* i. e. *he stretched his tent from beyond* the tower of Edar, or from a *distance beyond the tower of* Edar to that tower, marking an approximation to the place of the writer, as a person journeying from Bethel to Jerusalem or Bethlehem, must have approximated to a writer coming from Egypt towards the land of Canaan. Compare Gen. xix. 9. where the words עש־הלאה are employed to signify removal to a greater distance; *accede ultra,* says Montanus; *stand back,* says our translation; the præfix מ, marks a removal in the contrary direction. Now if this remark be just, what becomes of Dr. Geddes's criticism? I do not question his skill in the Hebrew; but I do discover a most unwarrantable negligence and temerity, combined with a most eager zeal to overturn the genuineness of the Pentateuch. "But indeed (he "concludes) *every thing* convinces me that the Penta-"teuch was composed at Jerusalem, or at least in Pales-"tine." Yes, truly, *every thing* convinces him of it, even what *ought* to have convinced him of the *contrary.*

But as I am compelled to expose what appear to me Dr. Geddes's errors on this important subject, so I feel much more gratified at acknowledging his fairness where he has reasoned fairly. On Gen. xxxvi. 31. considered above (vide No. X.) Dr. Geddes remarks, "this and the "twelve following verses were by Spinoza urged, as one "clear proof that the Pentateuch could not be written "by Moses; if he had only said that *this part* of the "Pentateuch could not have been written by Moses, "he would have said no more than what any discerning

"reader

" reader must in my conception acknowledge. Nothing " to me can be plainer than that all this was written after " there were kings, or at least a king, in Israel." True. And are we then to understand Dr. Geddes's strong assertions, that " the Pentateuch in its *present form* was " not written by Moses," &c. &c. to mean *only this*, that though the substance of it consists of the journals of Moses, yet there *were parts of it added* in Palestine, even after the reign of Solomon? This assuredly is all he can prove: how is it to be lamented that he was not cautious or candid enough to say no more. Then his criticism might have exerted itself freely, to distinguish the genuine text from the interpolations; and the more accurately he distinguished them, the greater thanks would he have received from the friends of religion and of truth, who are now compelled to regard him as an enemy, and view all his proceedings with suspicion and distrust.

AN ARTICLE IN THE APPENDIX TO THE EIGHTH VOLUME OF THE CRITICAL REVIEW FOR SEPTEMBER 1806, IN WHICH MR. DE WETTE'S WORK ON THE OLD TESTAMENT IS BRIEFLY CONSIDERED.—AN HUMBLE REMONSTRANCE TO THE REVIEWERS.

IN the APPENDIX to the eighth volume of the CRITICAL REVIEW, September 1806, I find a Work noticed on the Old Testament, by a MR. DE WETTE, teacher of philosophy at Jena; which, as it appears to maintain opinions very inconsistent with what seems to me the truth, and very injurious to the authority of the Pentateuch, I was anxious particularly to examine: I have not however been able to procure as yet either this Work, or Vater's Commentary on the Pentateuch, which is represented as maintaining nearly the same opinions. And I think it is unfair and uncandid to combat an author, whose system is known only through the medium of a Review, in which it must necessarily be stated indistinctly

tinctly and imperfectly, and possibly may be misunderstood and misinterpreted. I shall therefore advert to the article in which this Work is noticed, only so far as relates to some positions immediately connected with my subject, and which are *distinctly* stated as supported by Mr. De Wette. The first is, that the book of Deuteronomy appears to have been the work of a very different writer from him or them, who wrote the second, third and fourth books ascribed to Moses. It is said, "this constitutes a whole, and breathes a spirit which "in a very remarkable manner distinguishes it from the "other books." And we are afterwards told of "a *bold* "dissertation of De Wette, in which the book of Deu- "teronomy is *proved* to be different from the preceding "books of the Pentateuch, and the work of a later "writer, by the deviations in the phraseology of Deu- "teronomy from that of the preceding books." On this point Mr. De Wette and I are *fairly at issue*. That the book of Deuteronomy constitutes a whole, and that it is composed in a different manner, and with a different view from the three preceding books, I have stated. The three preceding books are *narratives* and *journals* formed at the time the events took place, or laws and regulations, recorded as they were gradually and occasionally promulgated, either by the public and miraculous voice from the glory of God, or through the medium of the inspired legislator; while the book of Deuteronomy is a *recapitulation* of those events delivered near *forty years after* the principal facts had taken place, in a public address to the Jewish Nation, designed to impress the Divine Authority of the Mosaic law on their minds, and to inculcate the necessity of perpetual obedience to the divine commands. But while this difference of object must have produced a difference of style and manner, I have endeavoured to prove that the Book of Deuteronomy, and the three preceding, must have been equally the production of Moses himself, not from

phraseology

phraseology * alone (for as to the variations in the phraseology of a language spoken above 3,300 years ago, by a nation of whose compositions so few have reached us, I conceive they cannot be clearly ascertained so as to form any very clearly conclusive ground of argument) but from the *internal structure of the works*; from the nature of the facts they dwell on, the circumstances they select, the feelings they display; in a word, from the *difference* as well as the *coincidences* observable between them, which appear to me to be exactly such as nature and truth must have produced had all these works really been written by the Jewish Lawgiver himself: and which exhibit a harmony so exact, so natural, and evidently *undesigned*, that it cannot be accounted for on any other hypothesis. It affords me some gratification to find that this topic of argument appears to repel by anticipation the objections of Mons. De Wette on this part of the subject, and in this instance vindicate the authority of Scripture: I refer my readers to the preceding Work, Part I. Lect. III. and IV.

Another assertion imputed to this Author, relates to the tribe of Levi:—"Moses (says he) may have introduced a priesthood; but who can define what portion of the laws relating to it was his production? If the tribe of Levi had been distinguished in the times of Moses in the sense and in the manner in which it is represented in the Pentateuch, and had been sanctioned as

* I would not be understood to say that the phraseology of the Pentateuch affords no presumptive proof of its authenticity; much less do I in any degree admit that it supplies any presumption against its genuineness—but purely that this ground of argument is not so clear or convincing as that derived from the general structure of the history, and the prevailing sentiments and feelings pervading it, and the harmony and connexion of the various parts of the narrative. In proof that the phraseology of the Pentateuch supplies a strong presumption in favour of its genuineness, I beg leave to refer to the learned Mr. Marsh's tract on the Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses, pp. 5, 6, 7. & 13.—I have briefly adduced his chief arguments in Part I. Lect. I. p. 8, &c.

"as a cast of Priests, a hierarchy would have directed "every thing; which history does not shew."

To this I *answer*, that the constitution of the tribe of Levi must to a certainty have been fixed *before* or *at* the original settlement of the Jews in Canaan, because we cannot otherwise account for one entire Tribe being *excluded* from the possession of landed property, living, not in *one body* as each of the remaining tribes did, but in cities dispersed through the entire land of Canaan, even on both sides of the river Jordan, and possessing amongst these cities all those which were appropriated as cities of refuge to fugitives in consequence of homicide.—We cannot, I affirm, account for this, but on the supposition that the tribe of Levi had been set apart *before* the *settlement of the Jews in Canaan*, to be supported by *tithes* and *offerings* instead of land, and that they had *consented* to the arrangement. Here then is a full proof, that the entire system concerning the tribe of Levi, their distribution, the tithes and offerings by which they were to be maintained, must have been promulgated and admitted before the settlement of the Jews in Canaan, it follows therefore that *every* part of the law of Moses, respecting *these points*, was coeval with Moses himself. Can we, then, doubt whether it was written and published by Moses? what inferior authority would have been competent to establish so singular an arrangement, unfavourable to the temporal interests of the Levites, whom it excluded from landed property, and to those of the remaining tribes whom it loaded with the payment of tithes and offerings?

Observe now the inferences which clearly follow from this fact. If the arrangements concerning the distinction, the distribution, and the support of the tribe of Levi, were necessarily *coeval* with *Moses* himself; can we believe that the purposes for which they were so distinguished, distributed, and supported, were not

thought

thought of until long after? Can we believe that the Levites were set apart from the rest of the nation by Moses, and that no business was provided for them to attend to, until some ages after?—that, in short, the Levites existed from the beginning, but that the Levitical law was, as Mons. De Wette is represented to have stated it, "the invention and badge of later Priests." This is incredible; we cannot but see that both are inseparable parts of one system, the entire of which must have been formed and established by the same authority, and at the same period: and as the arrangements as to the distinction, the distribution, and support of the Levites, must have been coeval with Moses, so must that Levitical law of ceremonials, sacrifices, and religious duties, for attending to which the Levites were set apart.

But Mr. De Wette asserts, the Levites could not have existed as a separate cast of Priests, "otherwise a hierar-" chy would have been established, which would have " directed every thing; which the history does not " shew."—Assuredly this is a mistake; wonderful indeed would it have been, if the Levites, possessing no landed property, and no political rank, dispersed through the country, and dependent for their very existence on the degree of reverence and obedience paid to the Mosaic law, by a people prone to neglect and disobey it, though they never totally rejected it; wonderful it would have been, if such a hierarchy had "directed every thing." But the Author was doubtless thinking of Rome, where at one period the Emperors were Pontiffs, and at another the Popes controlled Emperors. Indeed to some, the very sound of the word *hierarchy*, carries with it the idea of boundless wealth, and resistless influence; but the Jewish Levite, often poor, dependent, and wandering, did not and could not possess any such wealth or influence.

Mr. De Wette is further represented as asserting, that "it is astonishing and incredible in itself, that Moses " should

" should have published ceremonial rites so accurately " defined and so artificially contrived. The feasts appear " to have been the work of time and of successive con- " veniences rather than of a deliberate legal institution: " amid the deserts of Arabia, surrounded by dangers, " anxiety and want, Moses had no time to think of " feasts."—What! in forty years, during which the people were miraculously sustained with manna, and during above thirty years of which the Jews never saw the face of an enemy, and were confined within a space they might have traversed in three months—was it impossible to contrive and write down regulations for observing three annual feasts and conducting the daily worship and offerings of the sanctuary? But, says this Author (according to these Reviewers) " Moses must " have instituted the passover and the feast of taberna- " cles in the midst of the events which occasioned them, " and even before the events, as would appear from " Exod. xii. 3, but with which ver. 39. is at variance, " for in ver. 39. they appear to be taken by surprise, " while according to ver. 3. they must have been pre- " pared: The whole relation *proves* itself *untrue* by its " ambiguity and equivocation." This is strong language, whether used by the German Philosopher, or the English Critic. Strange that the inventor of this story could not avoid so clumsy an equivocation within twenty lines. But let us reconsider it: In Exod. xii. 3. the people get notice to prepare the passover,—" A lamb for each family," to be eaten with unleavened bread at a single meal—and " to be eaten *that night* in *haste;* it is the Lord's passover." We are then told that at midnight all the first-born of the Egyptians were slain, " and there " was a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt; " and Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, " and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my " people: and the Egyptians were urgent that they " might send them out of the land in haste, for they

" said, We be all dead men. And the people took their " dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs " being bound in their clothes upon their shoulders." And now comes ver. 39. which states, " and the people " baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they " brought forth out of Egypt; and could not tarry; " neither had they prepared for themselves any vic- " tuals." Here, says our critic, is a direct contradiction; for they had notice to prepare the passover the very night before.—True, but they had also been commanded to eat it as soon as it was prepared, and leave nothing of it until the morning; this therefore did not *supply victuals* for their *journey*. " But they had notice of their " departure, and ought to have been prepared with " victuals." The narrative does not say they had been told they should depart that night, Providence seems to have concealed this, that the sudden effect of the divine interposition should be more powerful and impressive. But if they had received twelve or twenty-four hours or even four days (the utmost possible length of notice the history will allow) notice of their departure, this was rather too short time for 600,000 men, with a suitable proportion of women and children, and a mixed multitude besides, to *collect into one body*, and prepare for *quitting for ever* the place of their residence for 400 years, with flocks and herds and much cattle. They might have been satisfied with carrying their bread away, without waiting to prepare it with all the nicety of confectioners. They had been commanded, in the beginning of the chapter, to eat the passover with *unleavened bread*; and in the end of it we are told, that they had no dough, *except unleavened*. And is this a contradiction?—Or thus, A whole nation had received notice to quit their country for ever, within twenty-four hours, or even four days; and yet they are represented as going away in a hurry and unprepared—here is another contradiction—and thus the truth of a fact is overturned, which for 3,300 years

years has been believed and annually commemorated by a whole nation, from the very period it took place, and the very *beginning of their year changed* to preserve a perpetual record of it.—Really all this would be very ridiculous, if the subject did not so deeply concern the best interests of mankind, and exhibit the inventors of such arguments, and their retailers, somewhat in the character of the madman, who, as Solomon represents, "casteth fire brands, arrows and death: So is the man "who deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in "sport*?"

I will at present conclude my remarks on this article, by advising the admirers of such theological critics as Mr. De Wette, to read over Leslie's Short Method with the Deists, in the original work; or, if they will condescend to peruse it, in the abstract I have made of it in p. 147 of this volume.—The reasoning of this old Englishman is certainly not like that of the modern German school of Eichorn, Vaters, and De Wette. But I think these reasoners might read it with some improvement.

May I now be permitted, with all that humility which befits an author addressing the judges who are to decide his fate, to *say a word or two to* the *Critical Reviewers*; and that is, to entreat them not to appear quite so sure that

* Proverbs xxvi. 18. 19.——Another species of argument which appears to be imputed to Mr. De Wette is, that if a practice prevailed among the Jews, such for instance as that of "offering on heights," and not going to the "sanctuary where God chose to place his name," the *Law* against this practice which now stands in the Mosaic code, *could not then have existed* there, and therefore so far that code is of modern origin. Now this is pretty much such an argument as if a Chinese one thousand years hence, reading of the frequent duels which are allowed in Christian countries, should infer that the command "Thou shalt do no murder" did not then exist in the Decalogue, but that it was introduced in consequence of that practice. But I am not sure this mode of reasoning was used. I only note it by way of precaution: it may easily be paralleled in the ingenious reasonings of minute philosophers.

that every objection advanced against the truth of Scripture History, *even* of the Old Testament, is unanswerable, until the public as well as themselves have had an opportunity of considering it.—They tell us indeed, that "in the remarks they have given, they have *not* "been declaring *their own* opinions, but those of the "author of the work, or of a German critic by whom it "has been highly commended;"—"they merely pro-"pose the subject for calm investigation;"—"they only "want to know of Revelation, WHETHER IT BE TRUE" (having, I presume, formed no clear decision as yet on that subject;) "and if it be true, it is of infinite moment, "and every thing good and fair and lovely must follow "the firm, the rational and unprejudiced conviction of "the truth." They do however communicate to us *some* opinions of *their own*, which I humbly hope they may reconsider,—"Here are parts of the old Jewish fabric "which appear to us (say they) as they evidently did to "Paul, to have nothing whatever to do with the pure "and polished structure of the Christian church; they "are a sort of clumsy and superfluous out-buildings, "which as soon as they are demolished will let more of "the solidity and beauty of the Christian edifice appear." Now I would seriously, and in perfect good faith, beg of these gentlemen to consider again, whether it is quite so certain that St. Paul thought thus of the connexion of Judaism with Christianity? He undoubtedly did teach that the ceremonial part of the Jewish Law was superseded by the Gospel; but assuredly he every where represents Judaism as the original foundation, the heaven-appointed introduction, the essential preparative for the Gospel of Christ. "To the Jews," he declares, "were "committed the Oracles of God*;" "The law" he pronounces "holy; and the commandment holy, and "just, and good†." "To the Israelites" he declares "pertain

* Rom. iii. 2. † Ibid. vii. 12.

" pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, " and the giving of the law, and the service of God, " and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of " whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is " over all, God blessed for ever *."—But these Critics dismiss the ceremonial part of the scheme, " as a *mere* " *jugglers contrivance*, which, " it were not the *work of* " *human artifice*; it was at all events little more than " what human artifice might be expected to produce." St. Paul, on the contrary, thought that " Moses was " admonished of God, when he was about to make the " Tabernacle; For see, saith he, that thou make all " things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the " Mount †." These Critics conceive the moral part of the law was entrusted to the *care of the prophets*; and they exemplify the *estimation* in which they hold what is generally deemed prophecy, by telling us " the " prophets prepared for the coming of Christ, not, as " is vulgarly supposed, by the delivery of *ambiguous* " *oracles* or *equivocal predictions*,—but, by turning the " hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; by " proclaiming mercy to be better than sacrifice; and by " shewing the utter nullity of all ceremonial observances, " without the practice of humanity, of justice, and of " truth." Now I humbly presume that it has been shewn ‡ these principles were taught in the Mosaic law, though they were certainly inculcated with additional force by the prophets.—But when these Critics thus undervalue the Jewish Lawgiver and his institutions, I fear they forget the declarations of One, whose authority they still acknowledge—even the SON OF GOD—who refers the Jews to Moses as bearing witness to himself; " Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; " for he wrote of me §."

Notwith-

* Rom. ix. 4 & 5. † Heb. viii. 5.

‡ Vide supra, Part II. Lect. II. from p. 239, to the end.

§ John v. 46.

Notwithstanding, however, the flippancy with which these Critics have decided and declaimed against the Jewish Law, they seem to have felt that they had plunged a little beyond their depth, and talked contemptuously of a system which they did not understand; and I give them much credit for the candour with which they state their own *surprise* at this *discovery* of the inconsistency of many undeniable facts, with their crude and hasty decisions: "What strikes "us with wonder (say they) in the history of the Jews, "and what may well impress general astonishment, is, "that even in the rudest ages, when the manners of the "people were barbarous and uncivilized, and when all "the surrounding countries were immersed in the lowest "depths of idolatrous superstitions, we do behold among "the Jews, and for a succession, not of years, but of "centuries, a portion of intellect, irradiated no doubt "by the Supreme Intelligence, continually at work to "prove the Being, and to preserve the awful conscious-"ness of ONE ONLY FIRST CAUSE: this seems to "prove, that the Jews were to be instrumental in "promoting some beneficent plans of the moral Go-"vernor of the world, in a way which no other people "were."—This is certainly a candid admission of very important truth; and I again most seriously request these Critics to consider, how utterly inconsistent this fact is with the hypothesis of Mr. De Wette, which they also appear to adopt, that the books ascribed to Moses, which contain that system of laws and institutions by which the Jews were rendered instrumental in preserving the knowledge of THE ONE TRUE GOD, "are tracts between which there is neither harmony nor "connexion; that the narration of facts in these books "proves itself (in many most important points) untrue, "by its ambiguity and equivocation. That there are "parts of the old Jewish fabric, which have nothing to "do with Christianity, but are clumsy and superfluous

" out-buildings; that the ceremonial part of the law is a " fugitive contrivance, the work of human artifice, or " little more — the prophecies ambiguous oracles or " equivocal predictions," &c. &c. It were indeed most wonderful and astonishing if these were the means which Providence employed to preserve the knowledge of the ONE LIVING GOD, in the midst of an idolatrous world. Our Critics will, I trust, reconsider these points, and hereafter adapt their opinions with somewhat more care to the truth of history, the analogy of nature, and the harmony of the Divine dispensations. At all events the reasoning and serious part of their readers will learn what degree of credit they ought to attach to such opinions, and such criticism, on the most important subject that can occupy the human mind—the examination of the divine word, the discovery of the divine will, and the development of the divine dispensations — and I submit the admonition of the learned, candid and pious Doddridge to the consideration of the Critical Reviewers; it occurs in his 143d Lecture, Sect. 18: " We may " certainly infer, that for any to pretend to exalt the " character of CHRIST and of PAUL as divine teachers, " while at the same time they pour contempt upon the " *Jewish institutions* as a foolish and impious forgery, is " a notorious contradiction and absurdity: and common " sense will teach us, that such authors, whatever they " may profess, do equally intend the subversion of the " Old Testament and the New."

SECTION II.

REMARKS on some Circumstances which have occasioned Doubts as to the Reality of some of the Mosaic Miracles —General remarks on the improbability of objections which affect only some one miracle, not the entire series —Miracles in which the Magicians appeared to imitate Moses; Mr. Farmer's opinion on this subject, and the arguments by which he supports it—The passage of the Red Sea, attempted to be accounted for without a miracle, from a passage of Josephus—true import of this passage—supplies no evidence against the miracle—it is represented by Moses, and was believed by the Jews, to be clearly miraculous—inference from thence—improbability of the Jews being able to escape by an extraordinary ebb of the sea—Dr. Geddes' observations on this subject—The pillar of cloud and fire which accompanied the Israelites—attempted to be accounted for without a miracle—account entirely inconsistent with the circumstances of the history, and with probability—Objection, from Moses's application to Hobab—inconclusive—Miraculous preservation of the raiment of the Jews in the wilderness—objected to—why necessary—Review of the mode in which Dr. Geddes accounts for the whole series of Mosaic miracles, without admitting any supernatural interposition—his account unphilosophic and incredible.

IN the preceding Work, Part I. Lect. VI. from page 145 to 177, I have adduced such arguments as appear to me to prove satisfactorily, that the whole series of the Mosaic miracles is established by the clearest evidence; and if these arguments are conclusive, it may seem unnecessary to enter into any refutation of such

 objections

objections as are raised, not against the *reality* of the *entire series* of miraculous interpositions, or the *general* truth of the history of the Mosaic miracles, but against some minute circumstances of them, some individual instances of supernatural interference; for, admitting any miraculous agency to have clearly manifested itself on the occasion and for the purposes recorded by Moses, the exercise of that power on the particular instances alluded to, becomes perfectly credible.—In this case, the remark which Bishop Butler makes as to our Saviour, is strictly applicable to Moses. "Supposing it (says he) "acknowledged, that our Saviour (or that the Jewish "lawgiver) spent some years in a course of working "miracles: there is no more presumption, worth men- "tioning, against his having exerted this miraculous "power, in a certain degree greater, than in a certain "degree less; in one or two more instances, than in one "or two fewer; in this, than in another manner*."—Nay, I may add, that the supposition of some particular facts, recorded as miraculous, being frauds and delusions, becomes improbable, in proportion as it is improbable either that *fraud* should be practised to effect *some* parts of a system, by a messenger impowered to establish the *remaining* parts of it by miracles; or that delusion and error should be permitted to blend with and debase (even at its first introduction) a scheme evidently supported by a divine interference.

These considerations might, I conceive, justify me in omitting to notice the objections and doubts raised as to some particulars of the Mosaic miracles; but as this might seem to cut the knot, rather than to untie it, I will proceed to consider such as appear to be of any serious importance. They regard, as far as I can find, the miracles of Moses which the Egyptian magicians appeared to imitate—the passage of the Red Sea—the pillar of the cloud and fire that accompanied and directed the

* Analogy, Part II. Ch. II. p. 242.

the Israelites in their journeyings—and, the preservation of the raiment of the Jews during their abode in the wilderness, recorded Deut. viii. 4. On each of them I shall beg leave to offer a few Remarks.

THE circumstance of the magicians of Egypt having appeared to imitate some of the miracles performed by Moses—has by some writers been considered such as to discredit the entire history of the Mosaic miracles; Dr. Geddes, amongst others, observes, "We are now "come to the famous plagues of Egypt, the prelude to "which in my opinion warns us to beware of implicit "credulity, and greatly weakens the literal credibility of "all that follows*." Let us consider how justly.

On this subject, after the best consideration I can give it, I cannot avoid adopting the opinion of the able and learned *M. Hugh Farmer*, in his Treatise on Miracles†. I do not believe that any real miracle, or such an exertion of power or foresight, more than human, and producing effects different from or contrary to the established course of nature, was ever performed, *but by the direct interposition of* GOD, or of such Beings as act by his *immediate* power and commission. And I am also with him persuaded, that the magicians did not perform works really supernatural, nor were assisted by any superior invincible being; but were merely impostors attempting to imitate the real miracles of Moses by *secret sleights* or jugglings; which to a certain degree and in a small extent they succeeded in doing, so as to deceive the spectators, until at length, unable any longer to imitate the effects of divine power, and feeling in their own persons its chastisement, they were compelled to confess "this is the finger of God;" and thus to give glory to God before Pharaoh and his servants, and

* Critical Remarks on Exod. vii. 5. p. 131.

† Vide Farmer's Dissertation on Miracles, ch. iv. sect. 1. page 409.

and to evince the futility of their own boasted magical arts, and the impotence of those base Idols and those invisible spirits or demons on whose aid they relied, more clearly and convincingly than if they had never entered into the competition, or had not been permitted to succeed to such a degree as proved that they had exercised freely and fully whatever arts or power they possessed, and had carried them to their greatest extent, but yet were baffled and overcome by the resistless power of Jehovah, their imposture detected, and their impious arrogance chastised. So that we can thus assign a probable account for the Deity's having selected such a kind of miracle, in the first instance, as might encourage the magicians to attempt its imitation, and for his permitting them to succeed in that, and even in a second or third attempt, because thus the Divine Power was ultimately more clearly manifested, and the imposture of magic as well as the absurdity of idolatry more decidedly exposed.

Such appears to me to be the true account of this transaction; the distinct parts of which the able Writer to whom I have referred has, as I conceive, fully established. I will exhibit his most important observations in as brief a form as is consistent with being intelligible, referring my more curious readers to the Work itself; the perusal of which will I think amply recompense them, by the learning and judgment it displays, and the truths which it developes. I think it unnecessary to detail the various hypotheses employed by different commentators and Divines to explain this part of Scripture History, as they have been fairly weighed, and, as I think, confuted, by this able Writer, whose opinion I adopt*.

"To this account (says Farmer†) it may be objected, "that Moses describes the works of the magicians in the "very same language as he does his own, and therefore "that

* Farmer, from page 409 to 419. † Ib. page 419.

" that there is reason to conclude that they were equally " miraculous—To which I answer, That if this were so, " yet nothing is more common than to speak of profes- " sed jugglers, as * *doing* what they *pretend* and *appear* " to do, and that this language never misleads, when " we reflect what sort of men are spoken of, namely, " mere *imposers on the sight*: why might not Moses " then use the common popular language when speak- " ing of the magicians, without any danger of miscon- " struction, inasmuch as the subject he was treating, all " the circumstances of the narrative, and the opinion " which the historian was known to entertain of the " inefficacy and imposture of magick, did all concur to " prevent mistakes?

" But, secondly, Moses *did not affirm* that there was " a *perfect* conformity between his works and those of " the magicians; he does not close the respective rela- " tions of his own particular miracles, with saying the " magicians *did that thing* †, or, *according to what he* " *did* so *did they* ‡, a form of speech used on this " occasion no less than three times in one chapter, to " describe the exact correspondence between the orders " of God, and the behaviour of his servants; but makes " choice of a word of great latitude, such as does not " necessarily express any thing more than a general " similitude, such as is consistent with a difference in " many important respects, they did *so* or *in like manner* " as he had.—That a *perfect* imitation could not be " designed by this word, is evident from its being " applied to cases in which *such* an imitation was " absolutely

* " When Moses describes what the magicians pretended, and seemed to " perform, by saying, *they cast down every man his rod, and they became* " *serpents*, and they brought up frogs *upon the land of Egypt*; he only uses " the same language as Apuleius (Metam. I. 1.) where, describing a person " who merely played juggling tricks—Circulatorem aspexi equestrem " spatham præacutam Mucrone infesto devorasse ac mox eundem venato- " riam lanceam—in ima viscera condidisse."

† " Vide in Exod. ix. 5, 6."

‡ " Ib. vii. 6, 10, 20."

" absolutely impracticable; for, when Aaron had con-
" verted *all* the waters of Egypt into *blood*, we are told
" the magicians *did so* *, that is, something in like sort.
" Nor can it be supposed that they *covered* the land of
" Egypt with frogs, this had been done already; they
" could only appear to bring them over some small
" space cleared for the purpose. But what is more
" decisive, the word imports nothing more than their
" *attempting* some imitation of Moses, for it is used when
" they FAILED IN THEIR ATTEMPT: *They did so to*
" *bring forth lice, but they could not* †.

" Thirdly. But further, so far is Moses from ascribing
" the tricks of the magicians to the invocation and
" power of demons, or to any superior beings whatever,
" that he does most expressly refer all they did or
" attempted in imitation of himself, to mere human
" artifice and imposture. The original words, which
" are translated ‡ *inchantments*, are entirely different
" from

* " Vide in Exod. vii. 20 & 22."

† " Exod. viii. 18. Le Clerc observes, Nec raro Hebræi ad conatum
" notandum verbisutuntur quæ rem effectam significant Gen. xxxvii. 21.
" Consult him likewise on Exod. viii. 18. ch. 12, 18. p. 66, 2."

‡ " The original word used Exod. vii. 11. is בלהטיהם *belaha-*
" *tehem*; and that which occurs ch. vii. 22. and ch. viii. 7, 18, is
" בלטיהם *belatehem*: the former is probably derived from להט
" lahat, which signifies to burn, and the substantive a flame or shining
" sword-blade, and is applied to the flaming sword which guarded the tree
" of life, Gen. iii. 24. Those who formerly used legerdemain, dazzled and
" deceived the sight of spectators by the art of brandishing their swords,
" and sometimes seemed to eat them and to thrust them into their bodies;
" and the expression seems to intimate, that the magicians appearing to
" turn their rods into serpents, was owing to their eluding the eyes of the
" spectators by a dextrous management of their swords. In the preceding
" instances they made use of some different contrivance, for the latter word,
" *belatehem*, comes from לאט or לוט to cover or hide (which some
" think the former word also does) and therefore fitly expresses any
" secret artifices or methods of deception whereby false appearances are
" imposed upon the spectator."

" from that rendered inchantments in other passages " of Scripture, and do not carry in them any sort of " reference to sorcery or magic, or the interposition of " any spiritual agents; they import *deception* and *con-* " *cealment*, and ought to have been rendered *secret* " *sleights* or *jugglings*, and are thus translated even by " those who adopt the common hypothesis with regard " to the magicians *. These secret sleights and jug- " glings are expressly referred to the magicians, not to " the devil, who is not so much as mentioned in the " history.—Should we therefore be asked †, How it came " to pass, in case the works of the magicians were " performed by sleight of hand, that Moses has given " no hint thereof? we answer, He has not contented " himself with a hint of this kind, but, at the same time " that he ascribes his own miracles to Jehovah, he has " in the most direct terms resolved every thing done in " imitation of them entirely to the fraudulent contri- " vances of his opposers, to legerdemain or sleight of " hand, in contradiction from magical incantations. " Moses therefore could not design to represent their " works as real miracles, at the very time he was brand- " ing them as impostures.

" Fourthly. It remains only to shew, that the works " performed by the magicians did not exceed the cause " to which they are ascribed; or in other words, the " magicians proceeded no farther in imitation of Moses, " than human artifice might enable them to go (while " the miracles of Moses were not liable to the same " impeachment, and bore upon themselves the plainest " signatures of that divine power to which they are " referred.) If this can be proved, the interposition of " the devil on this occasion will appear to be an hypo- " thesis invented without any kind of necessity, as it " certainly

* " Bishop Kidder on Exod. vii. 11."

† " As we are by Dr. Macknight, in his Truth of the Gospel History, " p. 372."

" certainly is without any authority from the sacred
" text.

" First, With regard to the first attempt of the magi-
" cians, the *turning rods into serpents*: It cannot be
" accounted extraordinary that they should seem to
" succeed in it, when we consider that these men were
" famous for the art of dazzling and deceiving the sight;
" and that serpents being first rendered tractable and
" harmless, as they easily may, have had a thousand
" different tricks played with them to the astonishment
" of the spectators *. Huetius tells us †, that amongst
" the Chinese there are jugglers who undertake to turn
" rods into serpents; though no doubt they only dex-
" terously substitute the latter in the room of the former.
" Now this is the very trick the magicians played: and
" as it appears by facts, that the thing in general is very
" practicable, it is immaterial to account particularly
" how the thing was done; since it is not always easy
" to explain in what manner a common juggler imposes
" upon our sight. Should it be suggested, that Moses
" might impose upon the sight of the spectators, as well
" as the magicians; I answer, that as he ascribes their
" performances to legerdemain, and his own to God, so
" there might and must have been a wide difference in
" their manner of acting; the covered arts of the
" magicians not being used by Moses, the same sus-
" picion could not rest on him that did on them.—What
" an

* " Those who desire to see instances of this from modern authors, may
" consult Dr. Sykes on Miracles, pp. 166, 168. Many pretended to render
" serpents harmless by charms, (ps. 58, 5. Bochart. Hieroz. part post, l. 3.
" c. 6.; Shaw's Travels, pref. p. 5. also, p. 429. and Supplement, p. 62.)
" though more probably they destroy the teeth, through which they
" ejected their poison. Herodotus mentions certain serpents which were
" quite harmless; Euterpe, c. 74. Antiquity attributes to the Psylli, a
" people of Africa, the extraordinary virtue of rendering themselves invul-
" nerable by serpents, as well as of curing those who were bit by them.
" See Dr. Hasselquist's Voyages and Travels, cited in the Monthly Review
" for February 1769, page 93."

† " Alnetan Quæst. l. ii. p. 155."

"an ingenious writer asserts is not true, that, according "to the book of Exodus, the outward appearance on both "sides was precisely the same. The book of Exodus "describes a most important difference between the "miracle of Aaron, and the impostures of the magicians; "for it says, that *Aaron cast down his rod, before Pha-"raoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent*; "but with regard to the magicians, it uses very different "language, for at the same time it says, *They cast "down every man his rod, and they became serpents. "It expressly declares* that they DID THIS BY THEIR "INCHANTMENTS OR COVERED ARTS; and what in "the most effectual manner prevented any apprehen-"sion, that the serpent of Aaron was (like those of the "magicians) the effect only of a dexterous management, "not a miraculous production, God caused his rod to "swallow up theirs, in which there was no room for "artifice, and which for this reason the magicians did "not attempt to imitate. This new miracle was not "designed to establish the superiority of the God of "Israel to the idols of Egypt; nor was it capable of "answering that end: but in the view here given of it, "had much wisdom, by vindicating the credit of the "former miracle * (which might possibly be more open "to suspicion, than any of the rest) as well as by "affording new evidence of a divine interposition in "favour of Moses. God considered this evidence as "fully decisive of the point in question, between his "messengers, and the magicians: for from this time "he proceeded to the punishment of Pharaoh and "the Egyptians: which affords a new demonstration, "drawn from the justice of the Divine Being, of the "falsehood

* "We learn from hence how little occasion there was for Moses to "detect the artifices of the magicians, who did not so much as pretend to "any peculiar divine assistance, and who sunk into contempt of themselves. "2 Tim. iii. 9. The nature of the works of Moses, and the open unsuspi-"cious manner of their performance, served sufficiently to disgrace the "attempts of his rivals."

" falschood of the common hypothesis, according to the " representation given of it by those who maintain that " the magicians were not plainly vanquished till they " were restrained from turning the dust into lice. Had " this been the case it would have been right in Pharaoh " to suspend his judgment till that time; nor would " God have punished him by the two intervening " plagues, that of turning the waters of the Nile (to " which Egypt owed its fecundity) into blood, and " covering the land with frogs: punishments so severe " as to imply the most criminal obstinacy on the part of " Pharaoh.

" Second, With regard to the next attempt of the " magicians to imitate Moses, who had already turned " all the running and standing waters of Egypt into " blood, there is no difficulty in accounting for their " success in the degree in which they succeeded. For " it was during the continuance of this judgment, " when no water could be procured, but by *digging* " *round about the river*, that the magicians attempted " by some proper preparations to change the colour of " the small quantity that was brought them (probably " endeavouring to persuade Pharaoh, that they could as " easily have turned a larger quantity into blood.) In " a case of this nature imposture might, and, as we learn " from history, often did take place. It is related by " Valerius Maximus *, that the wine poured into the " cup of Xerxes was three times changed into blood. " But such trifling feats as these could not at all dispa- " rage the miracle of Moses; the vast extent of which " raised it above the suspicion of fraud, and stamped " upon every heart, that was not steeled against all con- " viction, the strongest impression of its divinity. For he " turned their streams, rivers, ponds, and the water in " all their receptacles, into blood. And the fish that was " in the river (Nile) died; and the river stank †.

" Third,

* " Lib. i. c. 6."

† " Exod. vii. 19—21."

"Third, Pharaoh not yielding to this evidence, God "proceeded to farther punishments, and covered the "whole land of Egypt with frogs*. Before these "were removed, the magicians undertook to bring "to some place cleared for the purpose a fresh supply; "which they might easily do, when there was such "plenty every where at hand. Here also the narrow "compass of the work exposed it to the suspicion of "being effected by human art; to which the miracle of "Moses was not liable; the infinite number of frogs "which filled the whole kingdom of Egypt (so that "their ovens, beds, and tables, swarmed with them) "being a proof of their immediate miraculous produc- "tion. Besides, the magicians were unable to procure "their removal; which was accomplished by Moses, "at the submissive application of Pharaoh and at the "very time that Pharaoh himself chose, the more "clearly to convince him that God was the author of "these miraculous judgments, and that their infliction "or † removal did not depend upon the influence of "the elements or stars, at set times or in critical "junctures.

"Fourth, The history of the last attempt of the ma- "gicians confirms the account here given of all their "former ones. Moses turned *all the dust of the land* "*into lice*; and this plague, like the two preceding "ones, being inflicted at the word of Moses, and ex- "tended over the whole kingdom of Egypt, must "necessarily have been owing, not to human art, but "to a divine power. Nevertheless, the motives upon "which the magicians at first engaged in the contest "with Moses, the shame of desisting, and some slight "appearances of success in their former attempts, "prompted

* "Exod. viii. 6—8. Nor indeed can it be imagined that after this or "the former plague had been removed, that Pharaoh would order his "magicians to renew either."

† "Ch. viii. 8. Had they been able to inflict this plague miraculously, "they might have removed it in the same manner."

" prompted them still to carry on the imposture, and to
" try with their inchantments (or secret arts) to bring
" forth lice; but they could not. With all their skill in
" magic, and with all their dexterity in deceiving the
" spectators, they could not even succeed so far as they
" had done in former instances, by producing a specious
" counterfeit of this work of Moses. Had they hitherto
" performed real miracles by the assistance of the devil,
" how came they to desist now? It cannot be a greater
" miracle to produce lice, than to turn rods into serpents,
" water into blood, and to create frogs. It has indeed
" been very often said, that the devil was now laid under
" a restraint: but hitherto no proof of this assertion has
" been produced. The Scripture is silent, both as to
" the devil being now restrained from interposing any
" farther in favour of magicians, and as to his having
" afforded them his assistance on the former occasions.
" But if we agree with Moses, in ascribing to the ma-
" gicians nothing more than the artifice and dexterity
" which belonged to their profession; we shall find that
" their want of success in their last attempt, was owing
" to the different nature and circumstances of their
" enterprise. In all the former instances, the *magicians*
" *knew beforehand what they were to undertake*, and had
" *time for preparation*. They were not sent for by
" Pharaoh, till after Moses had turned his rod into a
" serpent: and previous notice had been publicly given
" of the two first plagues. But the orders in relation to
" the third, *were no sooner issued than executed*, without
" being previously imparted to Pharaoh. So that in this
" last case they had no time for contriving any expedient
" for imitating or impeaching the act of Moses. And
" had they been allowed time, how was it possible for
" them to make it appear that they produced those
" animals, by which they themselves and all the coun-
" try were already covered and surrounded? or what
" artifice could escape detection, in relation to insects,

" whose

" whose minuteness hinders them from being perceived " till they are brought so near as to be subject to the " closest inspection*? Now therefore the magicians " chose to say, this (last work of Moses) is the finger " of God.

" It has been generally thought, that the magicians " here acknowledge that the God of Israel was stronger " than the gods of Egypt, who had hitherto assisted " them, but were now restrained from doing it by his " superior power. But the text makes no mention of " their allowing the God of Israel to be superior to the " gods of Egypt, much less of their admitting the " former to be Jehovah and the only true God. Nor " do they refer to any supernatural restraint upon the " Egyptian deities, but to the last miracle of Moses, " when they say, This is the finger of God; or, of a " God; for the original word admits this sense, and " very probably was used in no other by the magicians, " who believed in a plurality of gods. But, unable to " turn the dust of the earth into lice (and even to seem " to do it,) they allow that this surpassed the science " they professed, and argued the special miraculous " interposition of some deity. There is no sort of " evidence that this language of the magicians pro- " ceeded from a desire of doing justice to the character " and claims of the God of Israel, or that it was not " merely designed as the best apology they were able to " make for their own failure of success, and to prevent " Pharaoh from reproaching them with the want of " skill in their profession. Certain it is, that this " declaration of the magicians had no good effect upon " Pharaoh, but seems rather to be mentioned as an " occasion of his continued hardness. Nay, the history " plainly intimates, that the magicians themselves " afterwards

* " There being lice upon man and upon beast, seems to be assigned as a " reason of the magicians being unable to counterfeit this miracle."

" afterwards confronted Moses, till, in punishment
" their obstinacy, they were smitten with ulcers
" I add, that the sense here assigned to their langu
" is perfectly agreeable to the account before given
" the state of the controversy between them and Mose
" for it implies, that the magicians had not so much as
" pretended to any miraculous interposition of the gods
" in their favour, but relied entirely upon the establ.shed
" rules of their art; and consequently that Pharaoh's
" view in sending for them, was to enable himself to
" determine, whether the works of Moses lay within the
" compass of it.

" I cannot conclude this subject without observing,
" that the strenuous but unsuccessful opposition to
" Moses added strength to his cause; as it seemed to
" manifest the divinity of his miracles, by clearing him
" from all suspicion of magic. This art was thought
" equal to the most wonderful phenomena. In Egypt
" it was held in the highest esteem, and carried to its
" utmost perfection. Pharaoh, without doubt, on the
" present most important and interesting occasion, en-
" gaged the assistance of the most able professors of it,
" who, from a regard to their own reputation and
" interest, would try every possible method to invalidate
" the miracles of Moses. Nevertheless their utmost
" efforts were baffled; and the vanity and futility of the
" claims of magic were detected and exposed, agreeably
" to the censure passed upon them by St. Paul; for,
" speaking of certain persons, whose opposition to
" genuine Christianity was the sole effect of their
" corrupt minds, without the least colour of reason,
" he compares them to Jannes and Jambres †, who
" withstood

* " *The magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boil; for* " *the boil was upon the magicians.* Exod. ix. 11. Does not this imply, that " till this time the magicians had in some method or other opposed or dis- " paraged Moses?"

† " Jannes and Jambres, mentioned by St. Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 8. from the " Chaldee

" withstood Moses; and did it, he must mean, with as
" little pretence, or there could be no justice in the
" comparison. He adds, *their folly was manifest unto*
" *all men**; and thus he taxes the conduct of the
" magicians with the most glaring absurdity. He can-
" not therefore be supposed to admit, that they imitated
" and equalled for a time the miracles of Moses, and
" then desisted as soon as they found themselves unable
" to continue the contest to advantage (which would
" have been a sort of prudence;) but to assert, that they
" wickedly and absurdly attempted to place the feats of
" art on a level with the undeniable operations of a
" divine power; and so shamefully miscarrying in their
" undertaking, they exposed themselves to the con-
" tempt of those, who had once held them in high
" veneration."

The miraculous nature of the PASSAGE OVER THE RED SEA has been questioned by sceptical writers, chiefly on two accounts, as far as I can discover; one, because Josephus compares it with the passage of Alexander over the bay of Pamphylia, in his Persian expedition, and as this is allowed not to have been miraculous, it is contended the passage over the Red Sea was as little so; and another, that it is conceived Moses may have taken advantage of a strong ebb tide, aided by a correspondent wind, which may have left a large strand dry, long enough for the Israelites to pass, but which, on the Egyptians attempting to pursue them, returned and destroyed them. And they labour to collect instances of such ebbs and refluxes of the sea in different parts of the world. I conceive both these objections

* Chaldee Paraphrase on Exod. vii. 11. are supposed to have been the two " chiefs of Pharaoh's magicians—Numenius, the Pythagorean philosopher, " (apud Euseb. Prep. Ev. l. ix. c. 8.) says they were inferior to none in " magic skill, and for that reason chosen by common consent to oppose " Musæus, for so the Hebrews called Moses. See Le Clerc on Exod. vii. 12, " and Pliny's Hist. lib. xxx. c. 1."

* " 2 Tim. iii. 9."

objections rest on so slight a support, that a very little reflection will be sufficient to overturn them.

As to the representation of Josephus, it is clear he believed that the deliverance of the Jews at the Red Sea was aided by Divine power. "The Egyptians (says he) "were not aware that they went into a road made for the "Hebrews, and not for others; that this road was made "for the deliverance of those in danger, but not for "those that were earnest to make use of it for the others "destruction. As soon, therefore, as the whole "Egyptian army was within it, the sea flowed to its "own place, and came with a torrent raised by storms "of wind, and encompassed the Egyptians: showers of "rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful "thunders, and lightning with flashes of fire; * thun-"derbolts were also darted upon them; nor was there "any thing which was to be sent by God upon man, "as indications of his wrath, which did not happen at "this time, for a dark and dismal night oppressed "them; and thus did all these men perish, so that there "was

* That there was nothing miraculous in Alexander's passage, is evident from the account which the accurate geographer Strabo gives of it. *Geog.* xiv. p. 666. "Now about Phaselis is that narrow passage by the sea "side through which Alexander led his army: there is a mountain called "*Climax*, which adjoins to the sea of Pamphylia, leaving a narrow passage "on the shore, which in calm weather is bare so as to be passable by "travellers, but when the sea overflows it is covered to a great degree by "the waves. Now then the ascent by the mountains being round about a "steep, in still weather they make use of the road along the coast; but "Alexander fell into the winter season, and committing himself chiefly to "fortune, he marched on before the waves retired; and so it happened "that they were a whole day in journeying over it, and were under water "up to the navel."—Arrian also describes it in such a way as to prove it was not miraculous: "When Alexander (says he) removed from Phaselis, "he sent some part of his army over the mountains to Perga, which road "the Thracians shewed him; a difficult way it was, but short. However, "he himself conducted those that were with him by the sea shore; this road "is impassable at any other time, than when the north wind blows, but if "the south wind prevail there is no passing by the shore. Now at this time "after strong south winds a north wind blew, and that not without a divine "Providence, as both he and they who were with him supposed, and afforded "him

" was not one man left to be a messenger of this cala-
" mity to the rest of the Egyptians."

Assuredly then Josephus believed this event miraculous: writing however for the Heathens, he adduces the instance of Alexander's passage at the edge of the sea on the Bay of Pamphylia, which by some was represented as supernatural (doubtless on as good grounds as those on which the Hero was worshipped as a god). " As for myself, (says he) I have delivered
" every part of the history as I found it in the sacred
" books; nor let any one wonder at the strangeness of
" the narration, if a way were discovered to those men
" of old time who were free from the wickedness of
" modern ages, whether it happened by the will of God,
" or, whether it happened of its own accord, while
" for the sake of those that accompanied Alexander
" King of Macedonia, who yet lived comparatively
" but a little while ago, the Pamphylian sea retired
" and afforded them a passage through itself when they
" had no other way to go, I mean when it was the will
" of God to destroy the empire of the Persians; and
" this is confessed to be true by all those who have
" written the history of Alexander. But as to these
" events, let every one determine as he pleases."

It is quite clear from comparing this passage with that immediately preceding, that the former period speaks the real opinion of Josephus; the latter is merely a mode of expression calculated to keep up the attention and conciliate the belief of his Heathen readers, as if he had said, Do not immediately reject my history as fabulous and incredible, because it relates the miraculous passage

" him a quick and easy passage." This supposed interposition of Providence, therefore, forms the entire of the miracle.—Callisthenes, indeed, who accompanied Alexander, represented the Pamphylian Sea, not only as opening for him a passage, but that, by raising and elevating its waters, it did pay him homage as its King; and surely it ought to have done no less, as he was not only a King, but a Demigod. This Callisthenes was a true Courtier.

passage of the Jews through the Red Sea; while you admit without hesitation an event stated by your own historians as of a similar nature, in the history of Alexander: in judging of these matters you can exercise your liberty. I have derived my history from our sacred books, to them I refer you to decide on its credibility.

Any supposition, of Josephus being a sceptic as to the truth of the old Testament history, is clearly contradictory to the entire drift and tenour of all his works. The learned and judicious Reland, as quoted by Whiston in his first preliminary dissertation, justly observes, that "Josephus uses the same manner of speaking (Book "iii. ch. 10.); after he had said that it was falsely "believed that Moses and the Israelites were expelled "Egypt for leprosy, he adds, *let every one consider this "as he pleases*; did he therefore intend to say that this "was also *uncertain*, it being no other than that "impudent calumny which he himself vehemently con-"futes and exposes at large in his 1st Book against "Apion, page 25 to 31." And Reland adds many other instances of his using this expression, where it is quite certain that he most firmly believed the fact to which he applies it.

Thus utterly ill founded is the objection to the miracle, from the supposition of its having been confessed incredible by Josephus. But after all, this objection is in its very nature futile and inconclusive; for, how can the truth of the Mosaic history, or the miraculous nature of any event which it records, be either materially confirmed or weakened by a writer who lived near two thousand years after the event, and who confessedly derived all his knowledge concerning it, from the very same sacred volume which still remains for our examination? Most certainly the reality and the miraculous nature of the fact must be decided by the credibility of the original narrative, and of the concurring testimonies

which either oppose or confirm it, if any such can be found. To these therefore let us direct our attention.

On this subject, it is in the first place an obvious remark, that the Sacred History itself represents this transaction as a clear and stupendous miracle, and declares that it was recognized as such in the hymn of thanksgiving composed at the very time by Moses, and from that period constantly preserved by the whole Jewish nation, and that every allusion to it in the subsequent parts of the Jewish history, the psalms or the prophets, presupposes and affirms its miraculous nature.

"Fear ye not," (says Moses to the multitude, panic-struck at the sight of the Egyptian army) "stand still, "and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will "shew you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have "seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for "ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall "hold your peace." What language can declare more expressly the certain expectation of a miraculous interposition?

This interposition was manifested in three things: the first, in protecting them from the attack of the Egyptians before their passage through the sea; the second, in opening that passage; and the third, in destroying the Egyptians. As to the first, the sacred historian gives this account: "And the angel of God "which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and "went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went "from before their face, and stood behind them. And "it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the "camp of the Israelites; and it was a cloud of darkness "to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that "the one came not near the other all the night *."

Now,

* Exod. xiv. 19, 20.

Now it is scarcely credible any historian should invent such a circumstance as this, so unlikely to occur even to the most fertile imagination. It is still more incredible he should hope to persuade a whole nation of the truth of such a fiction, and utterly impossible that such a fact if real should not be miraculous.

The historian proceeds; "And Moses stretched out "his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to "go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made "the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And "the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea "upon the dry ground: and the *waters were a wall unto* "*them on their right* hand, and on *their left**." Now this description is utterly inapplicable to any thing like an *ebb of the sea*. This would carry away the whole body of the waters, and leave a dry space, but it could never *divide* them; it could never make them stand *like a wall upon their right hand and on their left*. Or, even admitting Dr. Geddes's remark, "that we need "not suppose them to stand upright like real walls, but "only that they were deep enough on each side of the "shoal to prevent the Israelites from being flanked or "attacked from any quarter but from behind;" it is not conceivable how an ebb of the sea alone could produce this effect. The history plainly ascribes it to a divine interposition; and we must either pronounce that totally false, or the event it relates decidedly miraculous.

The third part of this transaction, is the destruction of the Egyptians; this is also described in terms which imply a decided miracle. "The Egyptians (says the "history) pursued, and went in after them, to the "midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, "and his horsemen." He adds, "And it came to pass "that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the "host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and "of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, "and

* Exod. xiv. 21 & 22.

"and took off their chariot-wheels," (or, as Dr. Geddes translates it, so *entangled them*) "that they drave them "heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from "the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them, "against the Egyptians *."

Here is another circumstance perfectly consistent with, and as it were regularly connected with, the former part of the narrative, concerning the miraculous cloud which divided the two armies; but yet so unlike any thing mere human imagination would have conceived, that it is scarcely credible any thing but reality could have suggested it. The narrative proceeds: "And the "Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over "the sea, that the waters may come again upon the "Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horse-"men. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the "sea; and the sea returned to his strength when the "morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled against it: "and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of "the sea. There remained not so much as one of them. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand "of the Egyptians: and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw that great work "which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the "people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and "his servant Moses †."

Nothing can be more clear than that Moses ascribes the sudden return of the waters, at such a critical moment as to destroy the whole host of the Egyptians, to a supernatural power; and states it to have been recorded and believed as such by the whole nation of the Jews, from the moment the event took place; and preserved in their perpetual recollection by that sublime hymn of triumphal thanksgiving, which he himself composed, and has transmitted to posterity in the next chapter. And it has been well remarked, that it is totally

* Exod. xiv. 23—25. † Ib. ver. 26, &c.

totally inconceivable that such a history could have gained credit with the Jewish nation, as we certainly know it did, had the facts on which it is founded been the consequences of natural causes, or of mere human contrivance; "Who can imagine (say the Authors of "the Universal History) that in such a case any credit "could have been given to his relation, when he declares "that God, who alone knew what passed in Egypt, did "unexpectedly make them take this new route; when "he describes his own surprise and the people's consternation at the sight of the Egyptian army; above "all, when he describes the sea miraculously dividing "to let them pass, and suddenly returning to overthrow "their enemies? What opinion must they have had of "his sincerity, if these events, thus ascribed to God, "were entirely owing to his own cunning and policy? "On the other hand, what must they think of his conduct, that could be guilty of such an oversight as to "lead them into such a danger, though under the "pretence of miraculous direction? And, finally, Moses "must have been the most impudent and the most vain "man alive, to attempt making such a vast and not "over-credulous multitude believe that their passage "was altogether as miraculous as he affirms it to have "been, when they could not but have been well "assured of the contrary, much less appoint a solemn "festival of seven days, and enjoin it to be observed "by them and their posterity to all future ages "in memory of their pretended miraculous passing "through the sea, when the experience of a much "shorter time than they continued along that coast, "could easily have convinced them that there was "nothing in it but what was natural, and what happened "every day *."

Thus unaccountable are the existence and the reception of the Mosaic History of this event, if this deliverance

* Universal History of the Jews, B. I. ch. vii. note s.

deliverance be ascribed to mere natural causes, directed by human contrivance and misrepresented by artful exaggeration*.

But let us for a moment set aside all the particular circumstances of the history, retaining only the two great facts, even that the Israelites escaped from the Egyptians

* As I wish to take the objectors to this miracle *on their own statement*, I have not judged it necessary to enter into a critical discussion of the spot where this passage took place; particularly as absolute certainty on such a point may not be easily attainable, at the distance of three thousand three hundred years.

I refer on this subject to the learned Mr. Bryant on the Plagues of Egypt (p. 358.) who, in a dissertation on the place of the departure of the Jews from Egypt, and their subsequent journey and passage over the Red Sea, brings many strong arguments and authorities to shew that the passage took place at *Bedea*, about six German miles, or about twenty-four English from Suez, "where and where only there is a defile which consisted of a long "extended coast, and was bounded by the *Sinus Heroopolitanus* to the "east, by the extremity of the Arabian Mountain to the west; at the end "was the inundation or inlet of the sea called *Clymax*, and now by the "Arabians *Colsum*: here were they situated, exactly as the text describes "they were, *by the sea*, and *entangled* by the land; the wilderness had "shut them in." But, says Dr. Geddes, "the sea is here near four "leagues broad by fifty feet deep; to have dried up a passage through "such a mass of waters would have been a prodigy indeed; for my part, "who believe there was nothing miraculous in the event, I am positively "for the pass at Suez, where at this day there are shallows fordable at low "water, and which might in former times have been frequently dry: we "all know what changes happen in the bed of seas as well as in the bed "of rivers, especially where that bed is sand, which the Gulf of Suez cer-"tainly is." There certainly have been such changes, but, unfortunately for the Doctor's system, in this instance the changes have been such as to prove that the spot where the Doctor supposes the Jews to have passed, instead of being formerly *more dry* than at present, was entirely overflowed by the Red Sea, which at that time flowed into the country, probably thirty miles higher than it does at present, and overflowed a considerable bason or lake which has been since separated from the Red Sea by a bank of sand gradually accumulating near Suez, and has been dried up, partly by sand and partly by exhalation. While this lake existed, and the communication between it and the Red Sea was open, it would have been more impracticable than now to effect a passage where Dr. Geddes and the other authors, who are only for a *half miracle*, or for *no miracle*, placed it. In proof of this former extent of the Red Sea, consult MEMOIRES SUR L'EGYPTE, publies pendant les Campagnes Du General BONAPARTE, par L'Institut. d'Egypte, Tom. iv. p. 218. The gentlemen of this Institute (as might be expected) will have the passage not to be miraculous, for, like Dr. Geddes, they think that

Egyptians by passing in some mode or other through along an arm of the sea, in which their pursuers were destroyed, and try the probability of the explanation given of those facts by those who set aside all miraculous interference.

Moses, say they, took advantage of an ebb of the sea, which, aided by a favourable wind (not as the original states, an *East* wind, for this, though it corresponds to the history, as it blows across the Gulf of Suez, and therefore if supernaturally increased might divide it across, yet could not answer this hypothesis) left a dry strand to a great extent, and dry long enough for the Jews to pass (perhaps by ebb succeeding to ebb,) while the Egyptians, attempting to follow them, a sudden and violent reflux of the sea destroyed them.

But, says Dr. Geddes *, "as for the ebb upon ebb, it "is now never observed to happen at Suez, where the "tides are very regular, and the difference between "high and low water only about three feet and a half." Those who have examined the tides here most accurately, assure us, "that the greatest distance that it "falls from the place of high water is about three "hundred yards, and these can continue entirely uncovered but during the space of half an hour at most, "for during the first six hours the sea doth only retire "by degrees, and in less than half an hour it begins "again to flow towards the shore: the most therefore "that can be allowed, both of time and space, of "passable ground, in a moderate computation, is about "two hundred paces during six hours, or one hundred-

"and

that the Red Sea at Suez has a strand that is passable at low water, which at the same time it is deep enough, *particularly when agitated by tempests*, to destroy a considerable army. *Quære*—If the Red Sea communicated with the Lake, as these writers have proved it did, *was this strand so large?* But these gentlemen have not pretended to account for the wonderful difference between the fortune of the Jews and of the Egyptians. It was a MERE ACCIDENT from tempests, &c. &c. &c.

* Note upon Exod. xiv. 21.

" and fifty paces during eight hours. Now it is plain " that a multitude, consisting at least of upwards of two " millions and a half of men, women, children and " slaves, encumbered besides with great quantity of " cattle and household-stuff, could never perform such " a march within so short, we may say within even " double that space, though we should allow them also " double the breadth of ground to do it on. This " argument will hold good against those who suppose " that they only coasted along some part of the sea, and " those who maintain that they crossed that small arm " or part of it which is towards the further end near " the port of Suez, as six or eight hours could not have " been sufficient for the passage of so immense a multi- " tude, allow them what breadth of room you will; " much less for Pharaoh to have entered it with his " whole host *."

In addition to this, how extremely improbable is it, that none of the Egyptians should know any thing of the ebbing and flowing of the sea, so as to foresee the danger they were exposed to; and how incredible, that they should all obstinately persist in pursuing the Israelites through it, when they saw it gradually return- ing upon them until they were all swallowed up by it.

But Dr. Geddes has examples enough to render all this credible. " At the Washes between Norfolk " and Lincolnshire, or the great estuary between " Lancaster and Hooksborough, but for guides hired " by government, passengers would often be swal- " lowed up by the returning tide †."—How unfortunate that the Egyptian government never thought of *hiring guides!*—True it is these tides are, in the Bristol Chan- nel, which according to Newton ‡ are of an extraordinary height,

* Univ. Hist. of the Jews, ch. vii. note P.

† Critical Remarks on Exod. xiv. 28.

‡ Vide *Newtoni Principia*, lib. iii. prop. 37. where he notices the great tides at Bristol, the "magnitudinem æstus" in that port, and accounts for its

height, from the nature of the channel, rising sometim to *forty-five* feet; whereas in the Gulf of *Suez* t rise only *three and a half.*

But then the Egyptians were "on a shoal betw "two masses of water, a deep stagnation on the "hand, and the sea on the right, both agitated "a vehement wind, which blew almost direct "their faces." This deep stagnation of water on the left hand is a new circumstance; the Egyptians, we must suppose, had never suspected the existence of this, or they would have known their danger better. But they may have laboured under other very *unfortunate accidents,* according to Dr. Geddes, "for if, while they "were on such a shoal, thunder and lightning attended "the tempest, it would be terrible indeed." Besides, "extraordinary tides have been always attended with "danger and death: An instance occurred at Marano- "polis, when the Emperor Valens was there; and lately "at the river Plata in South America; and those great "commotions are not unfrequently attended with "*earthquakes*:" (and what is most of all to the point, because it happened in Egypt and Palestine) "in th "year 1034, on a dreadful earthquake, which oblig "the inhabitants to live in the open air eight days, t "sea receded three parasangs, and on its return d "stroyed the people who had gone out to pick "cockles and shells." Here is then *precisely a par case.* Thus we see how the entire matter happ without any the least miracle; only an *unprecedented succession* of *fortunate accidents,* which occurred here to the *Jews,* and by which, with *tide* and *wind* in their *favour,* a *calm* sky and *firm footing,* they *escaped* along this shore,

its being impossible that there can be full tides in the Red Sea, "etenim ut "plenus sit æstus latitudo maris ab oriente in occidentem non minor esse "debet quam graduum nonaginta."—Now the Red Sea is extremely narrow from east to west: But Newton may not seem to Dr Geddes good philosophic authority; he certainly was so credulous as to believe in miracles and prophecies, witness his Commentary upon Daniel.

shore, while the *unhappy Egyptians instantly after* were intercepted by a stagnation of water on one side, and a tide on the other, both *unexpected*; a storm with thunder and lightning in their faces and an *earthquake perhaps* to close all, and produce a resistless reflux of the sea, which overwhelmed them; all these very unfortunate mischances *meeting* together at this critical moment, but at the same time *perfectly natural*. So much for the *passage of the Red Sea, without a miracle*; but the reader, will, I believe, allow, *not without* something *extraordinary*.

Another miracle much questioned, is that recorded Exod. xiii. 21, 22. "And the Lord went before them, "by day in a PILLAR OF A CLOUD, to lead them in the "way; and by NIGHT IN A PILLAR OF FIRE, to give "them light; to go by day and night. He took not "away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of "fire by night, from before the people."

Toland, and Dr. Geddes after him, are confident this was only such a beacon as is commonly used by caravans, or armies, to direct their march over trackless and sandy deserts; "*a wet bundle of straw* perhaps smoking "by day, and blazing by night, or a sacred fire carried "about in a portable altar; but the Hebrew Historian "makes a miraculous cloud of it *." Most certainly he represents it as miraculous, for he states that this pillar of smoke and fire stood between the Egyptians and the Israelites †, and prevented the former, though eager in their pursuit, from coming near the latter for a whole night; and that the terror of the Egyptians was augmented by the terrific appearance which this pillar of fire assumed. Again, when the Tabernacle was finished and erected, the historian relates that "a cloud covered "the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the "Lord fell upon the Tabernacle. And Moses was not "able

* Dr. Geddes's Critical Remarks on Exod. xiii. 21. † Exod. xiv. 20.

" able to enter the tent of the congregation, because the " cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled " the Tabernacle *." This insufferable and extended *glory* could not well arise from a *bundle of wet* or of *blazing straw*, or even a sacred fire on *a portable* altar; and let it be remembered, it was not *occasional*, but *permanent*: " The cloud of the Lord was on it by day, " and the fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the " house of Israel, in all their journeyings †." Surely it would have required a supernatural power of blindfolding and deceiving all the house of Israel, for forty years, to make them believe that a common fire was thus supernatural. It is adduced by Moses as one manifest proof of the Divine Presence, which the surrounding nations must hear of—and appealed to in his address to the people ‡, as an undeniable instance of the constant guardian care of God. Reproaching them with their refusal to obey the Divine command, and invade the land of Canaan on their first approach to it, he says, " In " this ye did not believe the Lord your God, who went in " the way before you to search you out a place to pitch " your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what " way ye should go, and in a cloud by day." From this glory issued the Divine voice which condemned the sedition of Miriam and Aaron §, and which denounced the plague inflicted to punish those who supported the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram ‖.

But it is said, that Moses has betrayed the secret of this not being a signal of the Divine guidance, by his anxiety that his brother-in-law Hobab should accompany them in their journeys through the Wilderness. " If " (says Dr. Geddes) the cloud continually directed and " guided their marches, what need was there for Hobab " to

* Exod. xl. 34, 35. † Ib. ver. 38. ‡ Numb. xiv. 14.

§ Numb. xii. 5 & 10, which notice the circumstance of this cloud or fire visibly descending from on high, and resting on the Tabernacle, and afterwards re-ascending from it.

‖ Numb. xvi. 42.

" to be instead of eyes to them? To me it appears from " this very passage that Moses was conscious Hobab " knew the wilderness, and the places in it proper for " encampments, better than himself, or his cloud " either*." Rosenmüller he quotes as observing on this passage, " that though the Israelites might be " directed by the guidance of the miraculous cloud† " where to encamp, and how long to remain there, yet " many things respecting the accommodation of the " people might be left to *human prudence*, in which " Hobab might be very useful." " Thus *prudent* and *cautious* is Rosenmüller," says the *Doctor, deriding* such an unphilosophic sentiment.

I presume that the Doctor believed that every well in the vicinity of the camp, and every spot of pasture in the neighbouring hills, and every plant useful for food or medicine, must have been pointed out by miracle, if there was any supernatural interference; those who believe otherwise, may think Rosenmüller's observations not quite ridiculous, " and that Hobab might be of use " to him instead of eyes," in discovering objects thus minute but not unimportant; and yet the miraculous guidance of the cloud still be admitted.

I would in addition beg leave to observe, that it is not easy to account for the Jews *remaining forty years marching*

* Vide Critical Remarks on Numbers x. 29.

† It will not perhaps be thought too minute an observation, that Moses tells Hobab, he would be useful to them, *not* in directing them *where* to encamp, or *how long* to remain in any station (for this the guidance of the miraculous cloud pointed out) *but* how *to encamp in the wilderness*, i. e. as appears to me, *how to arrange their encampment* in each appointed place, so as to embrace the circumstances of water, pasture, shelter, supply of fuel, medicinal or nutritive plants or substances, &c. &c. in or near that station, to the greatest advantage. See in Genesis xxvi. how the Philistines stopped up the wells which had been dug by Abraham, and how Isaac searched for and dug them again, and it will convince us how useful such local knowledge in Hobab may have been to the Jews. Mr. Harmer assigns these as probable advantages the Jews might derive from Hobab, *Observations on Scripture*, Vol. I. p. 482.

marching and countermarching in this wilderness, without either attempting to invade Canaan, or to return to Egypt, but by the *continued control of that miraculous power*, the constant presence of which, this *supernatural appearance visibly attested*. In a word, the effects of this divine guidance are so interwoven with the whole history of the journeyings of the Jews from Egypt to Canaan, that we must either reject the entire, as a mere unfounded fable in all its parts, or admit the reality of this miracle.

Another Miracle excepted against is that recorded Deut. viii. 4. and xxix. 5. containing the supernatural preservation of the raiment of the Israelites during their forty years wandering in the wilderness. From the mode in which this miracle is mentioned, I deduced an argument to confirm the genuineness and truth of the narrative*, which (if just) proves at the same time the reality of the miracle. Till this reasoning is refuted, I might perhaps be justified in passing unnoticed the objections to this miracle, which certainly affect not at all that argument; but it may be more satisfactory to consider them.

And, first, what is the statement of the history, Deut. viii. 4.—Our translation renders: "Thy raiment "waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell "these forty years." Dr. Geddes, with his peculiar elegance†, translates it, "Ye have not these forty years "worn

* Vide supra, p. 109.

† Take another specimen of this elegance in Exod. xii. 11 & 13. It is said of the lamb appointed to be eaten at that most solemn rite there instituted, "Ye shall eat it in haste; it is the LORD'S PASSOVER;" and again, "when I see the blood, I will PASS OVER YOU." For this, Dr. Geddes chooses to read—It is the Lord's *skip offering*, and I will *skip over you*. In his Critical Remarks he says, "It has been observed that the word *skip* "*offering* has a *ludicrous* air; and so now it appears to myself; but what "could I do? I wished to express the purport of the original, to leap "suddenly," &c. &c. and he concludes a long note; "But to *skip from* "*the subject* all at once, and to put a short end to the controversy, let

"I pass

" worn *tattered clothes,* nor have your feet *been blistered* " by wearing torn shoes."—Deut. xxix. 5 & 6, in our translation, " I have led you forty years in the wilder- " ness; your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and " thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. You have " not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine or " strong drink; that you might know that I am the " Lord your God." Dr. Geddes, " Forty years I have " conducted you in a wilderness, yet on your backs you " have never worn *tattered clothes,* nor torn shoes* on " your feet; bread yé have not eaten, wine or strong " drink ye have not drunken; that ye might know that " I am the Lord your God." On the former passage, Dr. Geddes remarks, that " all the versions, down to the " Gr. Ver. exclusively, translate it as our version; by " which one would be led to imagine what *credulous* " *Jews and credulous Christians believe,* that during " these forty years the clothes of the Israelites wore " not out. This comes of *too literal* translations. The " obvious meaning is, that they were never under the " necessity of *wearing tattered* raiment." And he adds a note from Rosenmüller, stating, that " the flocks and " herds of the Jews must have supplied them with wool, " goats hair and leather, and that there were persons " skilled in weaving and spinning, as appears from " Exod. xxxv. 25, 26†." I admit the truth of this observation, as far as it extends: but let it be remembered, that in these hot countries, the most necessary and

" *Phasar* be restored in my version throughout my first volume, as it has " been done throughout my second, and let the reader affix to it what " meaning he pleases." Our learned translator was determined to be either *ludicrous* or *unintelligible,* to make the sacred text appear either *burlesque* or *nonsense. For shame,* Dr. Geddes!

* On the importance of this circumstance, Vide Harmer, Vol. II. p. 379; and Vol. IV. p. 351 to 354. on the *ruggedness* of the way and the dangers of the journey in the Wilderness.

† Critical Remarks on Deut. viii. 4.

and the least lasting part of the dress of every class was *linen* *; now it will not surely be asserted that the Jews could in the wilderness *till* and *raise flax* any more than *corn*. As therefore God supplied them with manna, a substitute for bread, so he appears to have preserved their linen raiment from wearing by a supernatural operation, that they might not feel the want of *flax*. And Moses might recal the attention of the Jews to this miracle at the moment it was going to cease, in the manner I have stated above, p. 110, saying, "Thy raiment is not waxed old upon thee," not *marking distinctly what kind of raiment*, which the people must immediately recognize, the moment their attention was directed to it.

On the second passage, Dr. Geddes, on the words, "Bread ye have not eaten," &c. remarks, "These must "not be too strictly or literally understood; they were "not altogether destitute of bread, or of wine, both "which were used in their sacrifices, but that bread "and wine must have been purchased of strangers, as "they had no cornfields or vineyards of their own "during their nomadick life in the wilderness." If the Doctor, in this remark, had inserted one additional word, *fields of flax*, which the Jews certainly had not in the wilderness, he would have seen, that though they might from the materials brought out of Egypt, or by purchase from strangers, procure linen enough to supply what was necessary for the tabernacle, and though they might be able to provide clothes of other kinds for themselves, yet this necessary species of raiment must to the great bulk of the nation have been supplied by miracle, or not supplied at all. I therefore do not see as *much mischief* as the Doctor in *literal translations*, and do not think myself *credulous* in believing this miracle real, rather than believing that the whole Jewish Nation were

* Vide Harmer's Observations, Vol. II. p. 417, and Vol. III. p. 524 to 34. Fleury's Manners of the Israelites, Ch. vi.

were so imposed on as to believe it contrary to the direct personal experience of every individual amongst them for forty years.

To CONCLUDE this long argument, that my readers may be able to decide on whom the charge of *credulity* lies; and whether the Doctor and his followers observe all the rules of probability, and apply them with philosophic sagacity, in connecting causes and effects, when they reject and ridicule the Mosaic miracles.

I shall briefly *review* the *causes* the *Doctor assigns* for such of the events vulgarly deemed miraculous, as he admits to have taken place, while he denies any miraculous interference.

And as to the *Plagues of Egypt, excluding* all *miraculous* interference, my readers may perhaps be at a loss to conjecture what *adequate cause* can be assigned for any thing approaching to a series of events so calamitous, so extraordinary, and succeeding each other in such rapid succession. But the Doctor has found an adequate cause—it was nothing, more or less, than TOO GREAT AN OVERFLOW OF TURBID OR MUDDY WATERS; THIS WAS THE CAUSE OF THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

Hear the Doctor's own words*: "Such were the "famous plagues of Egypt, as they are related by "the Hebrew Historian; which narration, with all "the concomitant circumstances, if any unfettered "mind can really and truly believe, I will only say "that it is far, very far removed from scepticism.

"Is the story, then, without foundation? Perhaps "not. While Moses and Aaron were soliciting the "Egyptian King for leave to go with the Israelites into "the wilderness to sacrifice to their God, but in reality "to escape altogether from their tyrannical masters, it "might

* Vide Critical Remarks on Exod. xi. 22.

" *might very well happen* that an *extraordinary inunda-*
" *tion of the Nile* should take place, and be followed
" with an uncommon brood of frogs, gnats, and other
" most troublesome animals, a tremendous hail, a pro-
" digious flight of locusts, an unusual darkness, and
" finally a ravaging pestilence. And all these cala-
" mities might, in the course of nine months or so, have
" succeeded one another, *and been in a great measure*
" *the consequence of the first calamity*, TOO GREAT AN
" OVERFLOW OF TURBID WATER. But that these
" happened exactly according to the Scripture relation,
" it requires great faith, or rather credulity, to believe."
How conformable is this conclusion to reason and experience! It is surely particularly natural, and happens every day, that *too great an overflow of turbid waters* should be attended with *these consequences*, particularly with "a tremendous HAIL, a prodigious
" flight of LOCUSTS, and an unusual DARKNESS!"

So much for the Doctor's system as to the Plagues of Egypt.—Next let us review his system as to the supposed *miraculous division of the Red Sea*, the escape of the Israelites, and the destruction of the Egyptians.

On this occasion, the cunning Israelites, or at least their Leader, who doubtless foresaw every thing, though *no prophet*, deceyed their enemies into this snare, and, " having taken advantage of an uncommon * tide
" of ebb (where no such ebb is now ever observed)
" protracted by a favourable wind, " passed safe; the
" Egyptians pursued immediately, but they went along
" a shoal.—A deep stagnation of water on one side, a
" violent return of the sea on the other, both totally
" unexpected, a tempest may have blown in their faces,
" with thunder and lightning, which made it terrible—a
" tide as *high* perhaps as in the Bristol Channel, or in
" the river Plata, though in a place where at other
" times

* Vide Critical Remarks on Exod. xiv. compared with a note to the translation of Exod. xv. 21.

" time the water does not rise above three feet and an " half. But this tide *may have* been the effect of an " *Earthquake.*" All these *accidents* combining instantly after the Israelites had passed safe, may have destroyed the Egyptians; but there was certainly *no miracle*, all quite natural and accidental, though as to the Egyptians *very unlucky:* the artful Leader of the Jews, who had, it should appear, *foreseen* and taken advantage of all these *accidents*, persuaded his credulous nation that all was miraculous.

The CLOUD by day and PILLAR OF FIRE by night, which accompanied and guided the Israelites for forty years, and which they have always believed supernatural, and of which such supernatural effects are so minutely recorded, was nothing more than " bundles of straw, or " some equally common combustible, carried on high " poles or a portable altar, smoking by day and blazing " by night."

The MANNA, which is represented as forming the regular staple food of two millions of people, in a wilderness in many parts wholly barren, and this for forty years, is only " *a collection of grains* shaken from a " particular *shrub*, in the morning before the *sun rises**," which the deluded Israelites were persuaded to believe came from the skies—and to which they ascribed a property, " which has not been remarked to belong to " the common Manna, namely, that it bred worms and " stank, if kept until the next morning †." A mistake they did not seem to correct during the forty years. And again, they thought " that which was gathered on " the sixth day would keep unto the eighth." Another mistake: *credulous* interpreters consider *both* these as parts of the miracle.

The SOLEMN GIVING OF THE LAW FROM SINAI, which the Hebrew Historian represents in such terrific colours, " With thunders and lightnings, and a thick " cloud

* Critical Remarks on Exod. xvi. 14. † Ibid. on Exod. xvi. 19, 20.

"cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet "exceeding loud, so that all the people in the camp "trembled; and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, "because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the "smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, "and the whole Mount quaked greatly; and of which "the lawgiver tells the people, 'The Lord spake unto "you out of the midst of the fire. Ye heard the voice "of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye *heard the* "*voice.*' All this was mere artful management on the "part of the sapient Lawgiver of the Jews*."—"Nothing," says Dr. Geddes, "could be better contrived "or more dexterously executed than the plan which he "adopts to give a sanction to the precepts he was "about to promulge. The highest top of Sinai, where "he was supposed to have received his first mission, is "pitched upon as the secret sanctuary where he is to "meet the Deity, and receive from him a new code of "laws, to be ever after observed by the Hebrew Nation, "as coming from their own peculiar God: the people, "first purified by ablutions and abstinence from con-"nubial pleasures, are forbidden on pain of death to "approach the mountain; and the priests themselves, "who might approach it to offer sacrifice, are inhibited "from ascending to the summit; order is added to "order, and caution to precaution, to prevent the "smallest infringement of this injunction." Now comes another instance of the *uncommon foresight* or uncommon *good luck* of Moses: "while the people wait thus "in awe and anxious expectation, a STORM OF "THUNDER AND LIGHTNING ENSUES; this they are "told is the voice of God, who meanwhile is supposed "to give to Moses, in words articulate, the Decalogue "or Ten Commandments. Such, I conceive, to be the "whole mystery †," says the philosophic Doctor. I would

* Critical Remarks on Exod. xix.
† Ibid. particularly vers. 16. 18.

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